Golf US PGA Championship

Love conquers all

David Davies at Winged Foot, New York

THE good big 'un, Davis Love III, landed too many huge punches on a good and game little 'un, Justin Leonard, to win his first major championship here last Sunday.

Just when it mattered, Love produced perhaps the finest championship round of his life, a 66, to give him an 11-under-par total of 269, five ahead of Leonard whose closing 71 on a remarkably tough course might well have been enough to win his second successive major, after taking the Open at Royal Troon last month.

Love is the third player this year to win his first major, joining Tiger Woods (US Masters) and Leonard, and improved by 16 places his previous best performance in a PGA. His victory finally lifted from him the tag of being one of the best players never to win a championship.

Love, whose father was also a golf professional, has long been aware of his unfulfilled potential and said in the aftermath of victory: "It's been a rough trip trying to get to this point. It was hard to get through those last three holes without breaking down."

He went to the turn in a three-under-par 32, Leonard in 37, giving Love the clear opportunity to win his first major in 39 attempts. The final round had turned into match-play, with the players starting level at seven under and seven clear of the next bunch.

Leonard weakened first. A drive drifted off to the right rough at the 2nd and cost him a shot, a mistake further punished by Love holing a 20ft putt for a birdie at the short 3rd. Leonard had been getting up and down all week but when another drive finished in the rough at the 4th, he failed to chip close and missed a 20ft par putt. Love had opened a three-shot gap over four holes and this man with the suspect temperament was able to breathe a little easier.

In fact the gap continued to grow. Love hit two massive shots to the green of the 515-yard 5th, which Leonard was unable to reach, and Love's birdie gave him a four-shot lead.

At the short 7th, Leonard did what he had been doing all week, holing outrageous putts, and a 40-footer, only just on the putting surface, raced into the hole when it might have gone 10 feet past. Jarring moments like that have jolted Love in the past. This time, though, he produced one of his own at the next hole.

The 8th is a difficult dog-leg, demanding perfect placement from the tee and an accurate second with a longish iron. Love managed both, Leonard only the drive, his second plummeting into a thick clump of rough only a foot from the fairway. From there he thinned a wedge all across the green and did well to get down in two more for a bogey.

Meanwhile Love had been able to spend an eternity prospecting a tricky 12-footer, all downhill. He trickled it in for a two-stroke swing and 10 under, five ahead.



Davis Love III hits a tee shot at Winged Foot in his final round of 66 that took him to a five-stroke victory PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG JONES

Love was playing some exceptional golf. The previous best scores after 72 holes of professional golf at Winged Foot were the four-under-par totals of Fuzzy Zoeller and Greg Norman when they tied for the 1984 US Open, Zoeller winning the play-off. Love was doing more than twice as well when only two other players were able to get under par at all.

Leonard and Love exchanged shots at the 10 and 11th before the long 12th gave Leonard a glimmer of hope. Love, after driving into rough, was short in three, chipped weakly and missed from five feet. Leonard, with a standard birdie, pitching to eight feet and holing, closed the margin to three shots.

There is always a modicum of luck attached to the winning of a major championship and Love probably had his at the 13th. He hit his tee shot at this 212-yard hole well over the back and it seemed to nestle in the deep rough. It could have cost him a four or even a double-bogey five but his recovery was not only truly hit, it was precisely aimed and it hit the pin, stopping a few inches away. The lead, which might have slipped to one, was maintained at three.

Leonard then made the job easier for his opponent by driving into the rough and managing only a bogey. Although he got a shot back at the 15th, where he holed from 9ft, the decisive moment and another stroke of luck for Love came when Leonard's drive at the 16th nestled inside a large leaf. To move it would almost certainly disturb the ball, costing a penalty stroke, so he played it as it lay, pushing the ball to the right and short. From there he could not rescue his par and, at four behind with two holes left, his cause was hopeless.

Seven of the top 10 in the European Cup points list made the cut but nobody finished higher than Britain's Colin Montgomerie, who tied for 13th, 15 shots off Love's blistering pace.

Elspeth Burnside writes from Sunningdale: After three days of glorious sunshine the final round of the Weetabix British Women's Open was accompanied by pouring rain last Sunday. But nothing could put a dampener on Karrie Webb's performance.

The 22-year-old from Australia, who had led by eight overnight after a record-breaking third-day 63, did all that was necessary. Her final round of 71 for a total of 269 kept her eight shots ahead of Rosie Jones from the United States, who birdied the 18th to snatch second place from Sweden's Annika Sorenstam.

Scotland's Catriona Matthew and England's Lisa Hackney, who were paired together and both shot 71, were the leading Britons in joint fifth place on 281.

Webb, in regaining the trophy she won as a virtually unknown rookie at Woburn two years ago, set a British Open record of 19 under, five better than the previous best set by Jane Geddes at Ferndown in 1989.

US RYDER CUP TEAM NAMED: 1, Tiger Woods, 2, Justin Leonard, 3, Tom Lehman, 4, Davis Love III, 5, Jim Furyk, 6, Phil Mickelson, 7, Jeff Maggert, 8, Mark O'Meara, 9, Scott Hoch, 10, Brad Faxon. Wild card: Fred Couples and Lee Janzen

Cryptic crossword by Plodge

Across

1 Galahad's Quality Gin? If taken, knock it back . . . (6)
5 . . . again, i.e. as a cocktail, for starters (8)
9,10,11 Some sup this hellish dietetic brew for testing the delivery of those with a 4 for 5s across and 12 19s (3,5,6,10,2)
13 The connection between Kingston and Hull (4)
14 Delightful stray broke artificer's heart (8)
17 Mixed-up teenager, a relation of le Fanu (5,3)
18 Some star posters in hand: penny ones? (4)
20 A brilliant sailor's apprentice in county (4,8)
23 The county town? Use your loaf! (6)
24 The half-fare a European charges for get-togethers (8)
25 Yes! Worst development is in this Welsh town (8)
26 Name last tavern opened by new owner (6)

Down

2 Suffer from overdone spinach, eaten too quickly (4)
3 Men cut capers for Morris, maybe (4,5)
4 Truncated Yorkshire town took t'temptation to tipple (6)
5 When blown it charms a snake, crafty one of the 24 (1,9,5)
6 Plastic pours into the river. It's indecent! (8)
7 No! Non! Insolent little Man! (5)
8 Madcap tailoring a tunic for 10 is useless (10)
12,19 Scotch Pru (or I) quit U.S. soil That's rum! (10,6)
15 Numero uno (Ulster) set-up involves cable modulation (9)
16 Express passage, direct? (8)
19 See 12
21 A swig of this will put colour on your cheeks (5)
22 The Masters' man's gone dotty on the telly (4)

Last week's solution

Rugby Union Tri-Nations Championship

Smith faces the chop

Greg Growden in Dunedin

THE Australia coach Greg Smith may be axed within a month despite the Wallabies scoring more tries than New Zealand in last Saturday's Bledisloe Cup match at Carisbrook. In one of the more bewildering trans-Tasman encounters, New Zealand, with the aid of a strong breeze, sped to a 36-0 lead at half-time, scoring three tries, but the Wallabies replied with four unanswered tries in the second half.

For Australia, and probably Smith, it was too little too late, and the All Blacks finished their eight-Test domestic season unbeaten, with both the Bledisloe Cup and Tri-Nations trophy. Australia were handed their first 3-0 Bledisloe Cup whitewash since 1972 — and their seventh straight defeat by the All Blacks.

Smith's inability to register a win over the All Blacks in five matches may see him replaced by Rod Macqueen, the Australian Territory coach, possibly as early as the end-of-season tour to Argentina, England and Scotland.

"If people want to give you the chop, they'll give you the chop whether you are any good or not; it doesn't really seem to matter," said Smith, who has had two years in the job but little to show in the way of southern hemisphere success.

This Test was a shame of two halves. Australia were abysmal in the opening half, falling off tackles and offering virtually no resistance as the All Blacks charged through a weak defence.

But for the second week running New Zealand were unable to finish off their opposition, a weakness which concerned their coach John Hart. "It was a flat day but I don't think what this team achieved this year should be remembered by that second half," he said.

"They were in good shape at half-time but we lost a couple of line-outs after the break and just fell off it. And when you have so many penalties, the game loses its shape and flow." The French referee Joel Dumé's awarding of 42 penalties certainly robbed the match of any flowing rugby.

New Zealand have won both Tri-Nations series with unbeaten campaigns but Hart said they would treasure this year's triumphs more. They notched a season's tally of 415 points against 135, with 55 tries to 17. "This year's campaign was tougher, the draw saw to that," Hart said. "Last year we had the games at home to start with. This time we travelled to South Africa, and then going straight to Australia was a real factor."

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Eugenics scandal rocks Scandinavia

Alex Duval Smith and Maciej Zaremba in Stockholm

AS A teenager in Sweden during the second world war, Maria Nordin was shy, had poor eyesight and could not read the blackboard. She was not the kind of person the builders of the Swedish welfare state wanted more of.

When her headmistress suggested that she be moved to an institution, Maria's family was too big and too poor to object.

Höghammarsskolan had the makings of a kind of prison where the mail was read, laughing was banned and unruly children were beaten and placed in isolation cells.

But it was also at the front line of an explicit eugenics policy that began in the Nordic countries before Hitler came to power in Germany and did not end until 1976.

Nurtured by social democrats but reminiscent of National Socialism, it resulted in the sterilisation of more than 100,000 Swedes, Danes and Norwegians whose race, lifestyle or mental capacities were "undesirable". Nine out of 10 were women.

"The day I was called in to the doctor's office — I was 16 — I knew I would be made to sign the sterilisation form. It happened to all the girls," said Maria, now aged 72 and divorced, and living in Gävle, north of Stockholm. "I decided to refuse to sign. But . . . they said that, unless I did, I would stay there for ever."

In Sweden, hospital administrators could refuse to grant abortions to women who would not be sterilised. In the 1960s and 1970s, Swedish housing workers were asked to report tenants whom they believed should not procreate.

The policy was applied to alcoholics, travellers, those who physically did not conform to a look established by the National Institute for Racial Biology, and other people, called "mentally slow".

Before Sweden passed its eugenics law in 1935, a government commission stated: "The care of the weak and helpless has become more enhanced. From this stage it is not a big step to prevent the birth of individuals who, most likely, must become a burden to themselves and others."

Denmark's law was passed in 1929 — before Hitler instituted sterilisation of mentally handicapped people. In Norway, campaigning for the law, introduced in 1934, was led by a prominent leftwinger who considered Nazi sterilisation policies insufficient because they applied only to hereditary complaints.

According to the Swedish daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter, which last week revealed the extent of sterilisation in the Nordic countries — 6,000 Danes, 40,000 Norwegians and 60,000 Swedes — the trend was consistently led by leftwingers and met with some limited opposition from conservative politicians.

To Maria Nordin, the issue is far from resolved; only last year she was turned down after she asked the Swedish government for 100,000 kronor ($12,500) in compensation, a figure she now considers too low. "It seemed like this conspiracy of silence would continue for ever. I have not been able to tell people about what happened to me — there has been no understanding of it until now," she said.

Margot Wallström, the Swedish minister for social policy, last week issued a belated reaction to the revelations. She promised compensation to victims. — *The Observer*





Maria Nordin: terrible secret

Krenz: East Germany's last leader intends to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights

Krenz jailed for Berlin Wall deaths

Ian Traynor in Bonn

EGON KRENZ, communist East Germany's last leader, was jailed for 6½ years this week for the deaths of people shot while trying to flee over the Berlin Wall.

The jailing of Mr Krenz and two former Communist party politburo associates, on three counts of manslaughter, ended the most important trial of communist leaders since German reunification in 1990.

There were angry scenes outside the Berlin court after the presiding judge, Josef Hoch, ordered Mr Krenz to be taken into custody immediately lest he try to flee the country.

Elderly former communists, enraged at the very notion of the trial, and relatives of some of the hundreds of mostly young people slain during escape attempts engaged in furious and emotional argument.

Mr Krenz, aged 60, labelled the trial "victor's justice". "I will not give up", he shouted defiantly as police led him away.

Two other former politburo members, Günter Schabowski, aged 68, and Günter Kleiber, aged 65, each received three-year sentences but were allowed to remain free pending appeals.

Mr Krenz, who is the highest-ranking East German politician to be jailed for communist crimes, has resolved to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Prosecutors had demanded an 11-year term for Mr Krenz, who succeeded the veteran leader Erich Honecker in the last days of East Germany. Honecker was briefly put on trial, but his case was dismissed in 1993 because of his ill health. He died in exile in Chile in 1994.

Mr Krenz had expressed regret for the deaths at the Berlin Wall, but argued that the shoot-to-kill policy arose out of the cold war confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union.

But Judge Hoch ruled that the policy was not imposed by the Kremlin. Border officials were given "an ideological order" to shoot, the judge said. "The guards were taught that those fleeing were enemies of peace and traitors to East Germany."

In February 1989, Chris Güffroy, aged 20, used ropes and garden hoes to scale the Wall. He reached the barbed wire fencing facing West Berlin before a border guard shot him dead.

He was the last of more than 200 people killed at the Wall, and his was one of the three deaths for which the trio were sentenced. Güffroy's mother, Karin, left the court in tears: "I can live with it, but I wish the sentence had been longer."

Comment, page 12

Short sidelined in Montserrat aid row

Michael White

CLARE SHORT, Britain's International Development Secretary, was effectively sidelined this week when the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, stepped into the row over British aid to the stricken Caribbean island of Montserrat. He announced the formation of an official committee to co-ordinate assistance to the volcano-hit island.

Though no overt criticism was made of Ms Short or her deputy, George Foulkes, the new committee has a wide-ranging remit on how to deal with the economic plight of those islanders who have fled elsewhere in the Caribbean and the vociferous minority that remain.

The committee was due to meet on Tuesday to work through the three basic options: resettlement to Britain; relocation to Antigua or neighbouring islands; and rebuilding infrastructure in the so-far undamaged north of Montserrat.

"Our assistance strategy needs to be delivered speedily and effectively but requires co-operation across Whitehall," Mr Cook said in a statement. "The committee will ensure that the Government's four-point plan is implemented without delay."

Ms Short and Mr Foulkes have become embroiled in a public slanging match with Montserrat's new political leadership as the eruption, which started two years ago, engulfs more and more of the island.

Ministers say the new chief minister, David Brandt, is misleading islanders about the compensation they can expect from Britain. But Mr Brandt's allies say that Ms Short has been high-handed with her talk of "sheer irresponsibility" and "golden elephants".

Britain's voluntary evacuation plan has had few takers. Local reports put the snub down to various factors. "Primarily, Britain's relocation package is seen as insufficient encouragement to leave. Some feel it is insulting," said Keith Greaves, a local journalist. "Montserratians feel renewed confidence in their new chief minister . . . and listening to Clare Short's tirades, many locals have decided for now that they may be better off here than in Britain."

Island's woes, page 9

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

No room for the masses, huddled or otherwise

STANLEY KARNOW, in reviewing Joel Millman's book The Other Americans alludes to "chauvinists" and "xenophobes" who question current United States immigration policy (No huddled masses, August 10). Numerous public opinion polls, including one by the pro-immigration Wall Street Journal, show that a significant majority of Americans want a major reduction in immigration. Millions of these people are neither chauvinistic nor xenophobic. They understand that the 20 million or so (many more than the "hundreds of thousands" mentioned by Karnow) immigrants since 1965 have created economic and environmental problems for our country and that the continuation of current policy might be disastrous.

Yes, many immigrants, my wife and many of my friends among them, have worked hard to successfully contribute to the country. However, contrary to the review, immigrants are more likely than native-born Americans to be on welfare. George Borjas of Harvard University, an expert on immigration and the economy, has found that recent waves of immigrants have fewer skills and less education than natives, and they are more likely than natives to go on welfare and more likely to stay there.

Karnow claims that immigrants "generate more tax revenues than they take in services". The studies that claim to show this are piffle and balderdash. They conveniently omit many governmental costs. More complete studies show that our vast number of immigrants have a net cost to government of billions of dollars yearly.

Recent immigrants are about two-and-a-half times as likely as natives to lack a secondary school education. We are importing millions of unskilled and low-skilled workers, much to the disadvantage of our native working class. The irony is that each year's wave of low-skilled immigrants makes it more difficult for the immigrants already here to be financially successful. After all, why hire a native for $10 an hour when you can hire last year's immigrant for $8? Why hire last year's immigrant for $8 an hour when you can hire this year's immigrant for $6?

And then there is the environment. The US is criticised throughout the world for its vastly disproportionate per capita use of the world's resources. Yet we are the fastest growing industrialised country in the world. With current trends we will reach 400 million people (about 133 million more than at present) by 2050. A large majority of that growth will be due to immigration, because the million or so immigrants each year on average have significantly more children than natives. An extra 130 million high-consuming Americans will not be good for the country's nor the world's environment.
John Mitchem,
San Jose, California, USA

Palestinian perspective

I WOULD like to thank you for the refreshingly well-observed editorial "Washington needs to be impartial" (August 17). It showed true insight into the Palestinian position, which unfortunately is sometimes lacking even in informed debate.

As I read on further, however, I was rather depressed by the comment article by Jim Hoagland (Complicated math on the Middle East). It, alas, sadly reflected a rather biased perspective I have come to expect from the American side. Once again we are subjected to the old dichotomy of the sly, suspicious and devious Arabs and the long-suffering Israelis who simply react.

This lack of even-handedness does nothing to further peace in the region. It merely feeds old prejudices and stokes the fires of hatred. May I suggest the writer of the first article hold an awareness seminar for Mr Hoagland?
Helen Chessum,
Frankfurt, Germany

ONE must applaud the role of Jewish groups in succeeding to get recognition from Swiss banks for the injustice committed against Jewish and other victims of Nazi looting of their property (Swiss bank list opens doors to hope, August 3).

Perhaps it would be equally praiseworthy for them to demand similar recognition and compensation for Israeli dispossession of millions of Palestinians whose land, property, and belongings were plundered nearly 50 years ago, and for the 400 Palestinian towns and villages erased from the face of the earth by the Israeli authorities. Or must the practice of double standards for justice and human rights, continue?
(Dr) Ismail Zayid,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

THE report of the Israeli boy refused burial by both Jews and Christians (Israeli bomb victim disowned in death, August 17) brings to mind the first of Jonathan Swift's Thoughts On Various Subjects: "We have just enough Religion to make us hate but not enough to make us love one another."
Nicolas Walter,
Rationalist Press Association,
London

Get the balance right, sport

THE predictable baying of the English gutter press for the blood of the English cricket captain, Michael Atherton, after yet another Ashes débâcle is one good way of avoiding recognition of the real reasons for failure — which have nothing much to do with that unfortunate man's captaincy. The reasons for English flops are far more deeply embedded than can be addressed by the ritual sacrifice of the meek to the myopic racists who seem to control the tabloid sports pages.

What are the most obvious differences between Australian and English sport? First — pride. The baggy cap or the national colours are worn by Aussies with fierce pride and a determination to succeed that few English sportsmen seem to display with any degree of consistency.

Second — guts. You have to knock an Aussie down and have him bleeding at your feet before he will give in on of his will to win. Third — facilities and education. These start at school and in every community around the land, with facilities and opportunities for kids to get out and excel in sport.

England's greatest sporting celebrities are often embarrassing losers or inadequates, such as Eddie the Eagle, Paul Gascoigne and Frank Bruno. The way to the hearts of the English is to be a charming loser or eccentric buffoon. People with talent have the dirt dished up on their private lives or are hounded by the tabloids until they are tarnished stars — pulled back down into the mire of national mediocrity.
Jim George,
Woolgoolga, NSW, Australia

ATHLETICS fans will still be smarting after Britain's failure at the World Championships in Athens; finishing in 26th place in the medals table is humiliating for a country that has so many world-class athletes. But were our athletes so bad? There were many great performances and much personal courage shown.

Why is it that one gold medal counts for more than 5 silvers and one bronze? It would surely be more just to assign weightings to the places. If gold medals were worth 3 points, silver 2 and bronze 1, then the British team would have had 11 points, and have been in a well-deserved seventh place. Russia would have been sixth, not ninth, and Jamaica eighth, not 27th.
Tracey Runciman,
Hamburg, Germany

Lining up for a right royal row

YOUR report "Britain falling out of love with its royals" (August 17) conjures up visions of a future presidency. President Thatcher was the concept that enamoured me of royalty, warts and all.

There is only one country in the world which, while laying claims to democracy, permits the aristocracy control of the people's destinies through a legislative body exclusive to their numbers. The abolition of the House of Lords is a more pressing need than the replacing of the national figurehead by a self-seeking politician.
Ron Westerman,
Bayreuth, Germany

BRITAIN may or may not be falling out of love with the royals, but the poll — that unfailing measure only of fickleness and superficiality — reminded me of a question I was fond of putting to Intourist guides and other officials in the ex-Soviet Union. Seeing sizeable crowds worshipping in the churches I would ask why the Church is not yet dead. Invariably the explanation was that there's no one there but *starukhi* (old women) and *stariki* (old men) — a pejorative reference to what the poll in question more discreetly calls "over 65s". With their death, it was implied, the institution would die too. Apparently it escaped the apparatchiks, as it does the pollsters and Alan Travis, that, inexorably, the over-65s keep coming.
Alexander Maidan,
Toronto, Canada

HISTORY has shown that the monarchy has gone through periods of opposition and survived. It overcame the problems of the Civil war in England, the Glorious Revolution and the violence of the republican radical mobs in the aftermath of the French revolution. One thing is clear from the poll: the biggest battalion is 48 per cent for the monarchy, outnumbering the 30 per cent of possible republicans.
David Bryce,
Hamilton, Scotland

Briefly

CHRISTOPHER ZINN asserts that Australia's Native Title Act of 1993 overturned Captain James Cook's colonial perception of an uninhabited continent, or *terra nullius* (August 24). There is no evidence that Cook thought the east coast of Australia was uninhabited, or that he tried to represent it as empty to justify invasion. On the contrary, he recorded evidence of habitation even before he landed. He wrote perceptively and frequently about the various people he encountered between Botany Bay and Cape York. *Terra nullius* was a legal fiction invented after settlement to facilitate acquisition of indigenous land. It ignored data recorded by Cook and other early explorers. He can hardly be held accountable for that.
Leo Scheps,
Cronulla, NSW, Australia

NOW that Britain has kept its word and left Hong Kong fairly gracefully, will the United States do likewise and hand over the Panama Canal to the Panamanians and Guantanamo to the Cubans, both of which it is meant to do by 1999?
Rosemary Evans,
Victoria, Australia

I WAS appalled to read that Britain will continue to sell arms to Indonesia. I live in Indonesia and am shocked at the lack of democracy and basic freedoms here. Western countries such as Britain, the US and my native Australia bleat about the poor human rights records in Third World countries but continue to support the cliques responsible for those violations. They complain about poverty, but support the élitism that makes it possible. I would be happy to see not one more bullet, not one more cent given to dictatorships like the one in which I live.
Name and address supplied

IS IT ignorance or arrogance that leads Steven Moore to include James Joyce and Samuel Beckett in a list of British writers (Writer in exile, August 10) Perhaps he would describe C L R James as a British writer or Salman Rushdie.
J M Oseller,
Bethel, Caernarfon, Wales

THE reference in Charlie Blacklock's letter (August 17) to "chlorine-filled tampons" is misleading. On behalf of all UK-based tampon manufacturers, I should like to make it clear to your readers that none use chlorine gas-bleached pulp in their tampons and that the risk implied in the comment is without foundation.
Philip Barnes,
Absorbent Hygiene
Products Manufacturers Association,
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

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Kaunda injured in shooting

Vikram Dodd and Reuter

ZAMBIA'S former president, Kenneth Kaunda, was shot and wounded last week by police officers as he prepared to address an opposition rally in the town of Kabwe.

Mr Kaunda, who led Zambia from independence in 1961 until 1991, said he was slightly wounded when riot police fired on a car carrying him and other opposition leaders.

He said a bullet whizzed over him, grazing the top of his head, while another hit his passenger Roger Chongwe, leader of an allied opposition party, in the face, badly wounding him.

Rabbison Chongo, an aide in Mr Kaunda's United National Independence Party (Unip), said the 73-year-old former president had been discharged from hospital after being treated for a wound on his forehead. Mr Chongwe also left hospital after surgery.

Witnesses said that police fired tear-gas at the Unip headquarters in Kabwe and arrested about 30 party members as Mr Kaunda arrived. He was stopped from addressing a crowd and, as he fled, police riddled his car with bullets.

Mr Kaunda said that his successor, President Frederick Chiluba, was trying to have him killed. "It was an assassination attempt," he said. "There is no doubt in my mind about that. Chiluba is trying to sort us out. They realise we had gained a lot of support."

The Zambian vice-president, Godfrey Miyanda, this week denied Mr Kaunda's accusations that the government had ordered the police to shoot him during the rally.

Mr Kaunda has been trying to stage a political comeback since his loss of office in 1991.

He led Zambia from independence in 1964, and declared it a one-party state in 1974. But in 1991 he agreed to hold multi-party elections as economic crises fanned his unpopularity. The elections were won by Mr Chiluba, who banned Mr Kaunda from standing in polls last year.

Bitter harvest . . . a boy from a nearby slum struggles with a sack of yellow maize retrieved from a dumping site in Nairobi. Slum dwellers scrambled for the hundreds of tons of corn, which is believed to be contaminated. Droughts have caused a maize shortage in Kenya PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE MULALA

Bosnian Serb divide deepens

Jovan Kovacic in Banja Luka

THE BOSNIAN Serb president, Biljana Plavsic, summoned army generals to a meeting on Tuesday as the next tactic in her campaign to strip away power from hardliners loyal to the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

Mrs Plavsic, who has strong Western backing, ordered the generals to meet her after they issued a communiqué last week accusing her of overstepping her constitutional authority.

Mrs Plavsic attacked the Bosnian Serb hardliners on Monday for meddling in army affairs and said elections were the only way out of the current crisis. "They are playing with fire by trying to convince the army to align itself," she told a news conference. "This is the worst possible violation of the constitution."

Mrs Plavsic said that the parliamentary elections she has called for October, but which hardliners backing Mr Karadzic are trying to thwart, were essential. "The people want to join Europe," she said. "Those blocking that road will become part of our past."

There are reports in military circles that Mrs Plavsic might move to replace the Bosnian Serb army chief, General Pero Colic. The general was due to meet US General Eric Shinseki, commander of the Nato-led Stabilisation Force (S-For) peacekeeping force, before meeting Mrs Plavsic.

With help from S-For, Mrs Plavsic has taken over police stations in several key cities and towns. Sources close to the police said the next stations that could come under her control would be those in Bijeljina, on the Bosnian-Serb border, and Doboj.

Last weekend, television employees in Banja Luka cut connections with studios in Pale run by hardliners and began broadcasting their own nightly news programme.

The United States hailed the decision by Mrs Plavsic's supporters to take control of the air waves. At the same time, the US state department said that the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, telephoned the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, on Monday to deliver a firm warning on the need for him to support Mrs Plavsic more strongly.

Mrs Plavsic has also won over members of Mr Karadzic's ruling SDS party. The latest to support her was Dragoljub Mirjanic, the Bosnian Serb vice-president, who on Monday said his "bitterness has reached its ultimate limits" over hardliner tactics.

Mrs Plavsic, who dissolved the hardliner-controlled Bosnian Serb parliament last month, has called for fresh elections in October but hardliners are resisting the move and have obtained a constitutional court ruling saying the dissolution was illegal. — *Reuter*

● The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has launched a drive to bring leading war criminals — including Mr Karadzic — to justice by transferring their trials from the Hague to Bosnia. His proposal, modelled on the Nuremberg trials, follows talks with Momcilo Krajsnik, the leading Serb representative on the three-man Bosnian presidency and a former hardline member of Mr Karadzic's entourage.

PM gets court tongue-lashing

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Singapore

THE leading British libel lawyer, George Carman QC, subjected the Singaporean prime minister to a humiliating interrogation in Singapore's high court last week and accused the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) of using the courts to crush political opponents.

Goh Chok Tong took the witness stand to support a claim for aggravated damages in a libel suit he and 10 other PAP leaders, including the elder statesman, Lee Kuan Yew, have launched against the veteran Workers' party leader, J B Jeyaretnam.

But the prime minister, seemed unprepared for the searing examination of the motives and methods of the PAP's high command, in which Mr Carman three times called his integrity into question.

Mr Carman established that Mr Goh had previously fought two or three defamation cases, one of them involving three separate suits, Mr Lee, he suggested, had fought 14 to 16 and obtained huge damages. "You and your colleagues saw this as a method of causing financial oppression on this 71-year-old man because you wanted him out of parliament and you thought the court would provide a convenient method," Mr Carman said.

Mr Goh insisted Mr Jeyaretnam was no threat and there was no need to bankrupt him. "Counsel may not be aware of the nature of our society," he said, invoking the Confucian values prevalent in Singapore. "We stand for collective interests, not individual interests," he explained. "Here, if ministers and politicians do not defend their integrity, they are finished."

Mr Carman was not impressed. Mr Goh paid lip-service to democratic freedoms of speech, press and opposition but, said the lawyer, "there comes a point where you adopt them for your own purposes to stay in power and stifle opposition".

Mr Carman, in his summing up, urged the court to reject the libel action.

Haughey faces charges

Alison Daniels

CHARLES Haughey, the former Irish prime minister, may face prosecution after admitting that he misled an inquiry over $2 million gifts from a businessman.

The one-time Fianna Fail leader and finance minister came in for damning criticism in a report published on Monday in Dublin by the tribunal of inquiry into cash payments made by the former Dunnes Stores boss, Ben Dunne.

Last month Mr Haughey's lawyers disclosed to the tribunal that he had "mistakenly instructed his legal team" and admitted he had received gifts from Mr Dunne and his solicitor totalling $2 million after earlier denying all knowledge of the payments.

The report concluded that Mr Haughey's attitude could amount to an offence, and said that all relevant papers concerning his behaviour were being submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The man dubbed the Houdini of Irish politics during a 35-year career that survived allegations of illegal arms imports and a phone-tapping row may find it harder to escape a back-tax bill of $1.6 million if the Irish Revenue Commission decides to investigate the affair.

While Mr Haughey remained silent on the tribunal findings, the Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern, was quick to promise that the government would establish an anti-sleaze commission after studying the report's recommendations advocating the tightening up of recent Ethics in Public Office legislation and disclosure rules.

In a statement Mr Ahern said he was dismayed by the 121-page report, which revealed a "falling short of the ideals of honesty, truthfulness and integrity" that were fundamental requirements of all in public office. The cabinet would also consider whether there should be a second tribunal to investigate issues surrounding payments to politicians.

The report said the tribunal had been unable to accept much of Mr Haughey's evidence.

The Week

SCIENTISTS, government agencies and industrialists meeting in Hyderabad, India, called for worldwide action to halt the spread of malaria, which kills up to 3 million people a year.
Comment, page 12
Nocturnal killer, page 24

PLANS to subsidise 350,000 community service jobs for young people were approved by France's cabinet. The total cost of the work-creation scheme will be around $5 billion.
Le Monde, page 13

SEVEN Turkish police officers charged with beating a reporter to death were brought to court for the first time since the trial opened a year ago. Two officers remain at large and two others did not appear in court in Afyon, southwest of Istanbul.

AT LEAST seven senior members of Afghanistan's anti-Taliban coalition died when a plane carrying them crashed, killing everyone on board.

COLONEL Makmud Khudaberdiyev, who took up arms against a deal that brought peace to Tajikistan, was forced by government troops to flee, his mutinous army unit apparently surrounded and crushed.

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin urged the Russian parliament to approve an amnesty for nearly 500,000 prisoners to ease overcrowding in the country's disease-ridden jails.

THE organisers of the events during the Pope's four-day visit to France blamed a $5 million deficit on youthful pilgrims who failed to pay up.
Washington Post, page 15

CHINA executed at least 4,367 people in 1996, Amnesty International said, the highest figure since 1993.

THE Cuban government showed a UN meeting pictures which it said showed a US operation to plague the island with a crop-eating pest. Washington denied the accusation.

THE bankrupt Australian entrepreneur Alan Bond was ordered to serve seven years in jail for a $800 million fraud, six months after he was told he would serve only four years.

DANI OKEV, an Israeli army reserve major, has confessed to shooting dead a British student hitch-hiker and wounding his girlfriend after offering them a lift through the Negev desert.

ERIC GAIRY, the politician who led Grenada's movement for independence from Britain and later became prime minister of the Caribbean country, has died aged 75.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Florida wins $11bn tobacco payout

Martin Walker in Washington

IN A pivotal court case this week, five United States tobacco giants agreed to pay the state of Florida $11.3 billion compensation for public health costs, and as punishment for what the state's governor called years of "dark and dirty secrets and lies".

"Florida's victory includes the largest monetary concessions the industry has ever paid, and the toughest prohibitions ever imposed on advertising and marketing to children," a statement from Governor Lawton Chiles said.

The settlement threatens to unravel a $368 billion nationwide compensation plan agreed with state governments in June and encourage other states to pursue separate lawsuits in the hope of gaining bigger payments.

The beleaguered industry also faces two more attacks that could damage its long-term strategy of shifting its marketing focus to the developing world.

The White House has summoned Hollywood chiefs to a meeting next week to protest at the portrayal of smoking in big-budget films aimed at the global market. And the World Health Organisation convened a conference in Beijing to demand that multinational tobacco companies which experience controls in their home countries should not be free to expand their markets to other countries.

Each of the current top five films has featured smoking, including the Disney cartoon Hercules, aimed at children, which portrays the god Hades lighting a cigar.

Film director Barry Sonnenfeld is leading Hollywood's counter-attack. "The Clinton administration and politics in general should either stay away from this or change the constitution to no longer allow freedom of speech," he said.

A survey by the American Journal of Public Health published three years ago found that 38 per cent of lead characters in films were shown smoking in the 1960s, dropping to 29 per cent in the 1970s. The study's author, Professor Stanton Glantz of the University of California, said that during the 1990s, "we have seen a big increase".

Vice-President Al Gore is expected to tell Hollywood studio chiefs next month that the current rules against advertising tobacco could be applied to films.

The US tobacco industry thought it had reached a settlement with its tormentors in June, when it reached a $368 billion compensation deal with state governments in return for the right to keep making the profits that will finance the deal. The White House is currently reviewing the agreement with a view to strengthening government regulation of nicotine.

Florida's attorney general, Bob Butterworth, said the national tobacco pact, if approved by Congress, would supersede the state's settlement "to some extent". Mr Chiles called the deal an "insurance policy", since Florida is guaranteed its money even if the national agreement fails.

However, neither states nor the federal government will back away from the other provisions of the nationwide agreement, under which vending machines and almost all tobacco advertising will be outlawed, and individual smokers will be entitled to $600 to buy anti-smoking treatments.

Smoking will be banned in almost all public places in the US. and cigarettes will have to be kept out of sight in shops.

Cambodian royalists lose base

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

ARMED resistance to the July 5 coup by the Cambodian strongman Hun Sen suffered a serious setback last weekend when his troops seized control of the northwestern town of O'Smach, the last base held by forces supporting the ousted first prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

The forces exchanged artillery and mortar fire for several hours before Hun Sen's army pushed the heavily outnumbered royalists back to within a few hundred metres of the Thai border.

At one point Thai troops fired warning flares after several artillery rounds landed on their side, and stepped up security along the barbed wire border to prevent troops of either Cambodian faction entering Thai territory.

Thai military officials said that only 50 or so of the prince's soldiers were left near O'Smach and that the rest had scattered into the forest of northwestern Cambodia.

More than 21,000 residents of O'Smach had already fled over the border to camps now holding 33,000 refugees from the fighting that has engulfed this area of Cambodia for the past few weeks.

No details have emerged of casualties in the latest fighting but recent reports suggest that Hun Sen's troops suffered serious losses as they advanced through heavily mined territory, and that some troops were killed or injured by mines as they sought to get at the royalists across Thai territory.

Hun Sen sent substantial reinforcements of men and artillery to the area after his forces failed to meet the August 18 deadline he had set for the capture of O'Smach.

Prince Ranariddh's troops, estimated at up to 2,000 compared with anything from 3,000 to 7,000 deployed by Hun Sen, managed to hold on this long only with the help of Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

The two fought as allies in a resistance coalition against the Phnom Penh government before peace agreements were signed in 1991. They are both hostile to the Hun Sen-dominated government but have little hope of building a new resistance movement that is militarily credible.

Hun Sen, who staged his coup to pre-empt an alliance between Prince Ranariddh's Funcinpec party and what remains of the Khmer Rouge, has said he will launch an offensive against the group's last stronghold, Anlong Veng, in December, after the start of the dry season.

"We will unify Cambodia into one part," he said. "We won't let Cambodia be divided into two parts with two governments."

Prince Ranariddh, who publicly distances himself from the Khmer Rouge, faces an uphill task in persuading foreign governments to keep up diplomatic support for his position as first prime minister now that Hun Sen has picked a replacement.

Party threat to topple leader in Paraguay

Phil Gunson

PARAGUAY'S first democratically elected leader in 50 years is threatened with impeachment in a move orchestrated by the leaders of his own party.

The crisis comes at an embarrassing moment for President Juan Carlos Wasmosy, who played host to Latin American presidents from member countries of the Rio Group last weekend.

Things have been going from bad to worse for the Paraguayan leader since General Lino Oviedo staged a coup attempt in April last year. A few months later, the president's supporters lost control of the ruling Colorado party to the party chairman, Luis Maria Argaña, who has accused Mr Wasmosy of obtaining the presidential candidacy by fraud.

This month Mr Wasmosy brought charges against the party's leaders for "trying to promote a popular uprising". His opponents retaliated with a unanimous vote for his impeachment and a threat to expel him from the party. They accuse him of "a series of political crimes of extreme gravity", of which the latest is an alleged plot to use the army to impose his chosen successor as the Colorado party candidate in the presidential election scheduled for next year.

Internal party elections are scheduled for next month, and Mr Argaña and Gen Oviedo — retired from the army but cleared of charges of rebellion — are seeking the candidacy.

Mr Wasmosy is also accused of involvement in a $3 million fraud and arms trafficking ring, as well as improper use of state property and fraudulent privatisations.

However, Mr Wasmosy seems unlikely to be removed by congress, because such a move would require a two-thirds majority in both houses, and the opposition is unlikely to participate.

Paraguay was ruled for more than 40 years by Alfredo Stroessner, a military dictator who used the Colorado party as his vehicle in a string of fraudulent elections until his overthrow in 1989.



Car booty . . . Two men complete the burial of one of 10 Cadillacs from the Cadillac Ranch pop art display near Amarillo, Texas. The cars were moved by millionaire Stanley Marsh from a nearby wheatfield to escape the urban sprawl threatening the site PHOTOGRAPH: FLO CORDERO

Kohl tries to put lid on unruly cabinet

Ian Traynor in Bonn

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl tried to clamp down on his unruly cabinet this week, angrily spurning calls for a reshuffle, while the opposition Social Democrats declared that his days were numbered and that Germany badly needed a "fresh start".

Mr Kohl returned to the helm in Bonn after a month's holiday to find a credibility crisis sparked by the admission of the finance minister, Theo Waigel, that he was tired of his job.

While cabinet members and hopefuls manoeuvred for position in expectation of a swift reshuffle, Mr Kohl called Mr Waigel to heel and insisted that there would be no change. "This discussion has really annoyed me. I have no intention of reshuffling my cabinet," he told the best-selling Bildzeitung tabloid.

Despite Mr Kohl's best efforts to restore a semblance of order to his bickering three-party coalition, the disarray was highlighted by an interview published on Monday in which Mr Waigel confided that Mr Kohl had assured him there would indeed be a reshuffle.

Michael Glos, the parliamentary chief in Bonn for Mr Waigel's Bavarian Christian Social Union, kept up the pressure by saying "the bulk of the public" was keen to see a reshuffle.

Given the government's increasing penchant for shooting itself in the foot, the Social Democrat leader, Oskar Lafontaine, and the Greens called for early elections to avoid waiting for the poll in September next year. "The debate about a cabinet reshuffle is not about individual ministers. It is about Helmut Kohl and his policies," Mr Lafontaine said. "Helmut Kohl's policies are the reason for the highest unemployment, the highest state debt, and the highest taxes since the second world war."

Mr Waigel's publicly declared weariness of office was the "admission of failed economic and financial policy".

But Mr Kohl insisted that Mr Waigel would remain at his post, not least because Europe's longest-serving finance minister is crucial to the chancellor's hopes of seeing the single European currency launched on time.

The crunch time for deciding who qualifies for the euro is looming this autumn, and Mr Waigel, as the architect of the euro stability pact governing participation after the currency launch, is a key figure.

Mr Kohl was expected to meet the French prime minister in Bonn this week on Lionel Jospin's first visit as head of government, and the talks are expected to focus on the two countries' differing views on making the grade for the euro.

While Mr Kohl's authority has been dealt a severe blow by the constant government squabbling, he received a mild fillip when 58 prominent economists offered sweeping endorsement of his euro policies and said the new currency should be launched on schedule in 1999 even if Germany failed to keep its budget deficit to the required 3 per cent of gross domestic product this year.

"A currency's quality is not determined by whether the deficit is 3 per cent or 3.2 per cent in a sample year such as 1997," they said.

Wolfgang Schäuble, Mr Kohl's number two, is believed to have been savouring the prospect of replacing Mr Waigel at the head of a new super-ministry combining the finance and economics portfolios, which would have made him the key single currency figure.

But Mr Kohl ruled out any talk of ministry mergers, and said he had no intention of changing the number of cabinet seats.

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South Africa's reconciliation hits the buffers

David Beresford in Johannesburg

DAWIE DE VILLIERS said sorry last week. The former Springbok rugby captain, ex-cabinet minister, doctor of philosophy and cleric, bowed out of politics, making his farewell to Cape Town's parliament with a confession, an abject apology for apartheid.

There was something satisfying, almost biblical, about the moment: the golden boy of Afrikanerdom shouldering the sins of his fathers; the man seemingly destined to lead a nation brought down by the iniquity of the system into which he was born.

In a way, it represented the apotheosis of the anti-apartheid struggle, the realisation of the truth and the final victory in the titanic battle between good and evil so long represented by South Africa.

And yet, amid this feast of righteousness, there is the whiff of a confusion of justice across the country. In Pretoria's city hall, two murderers are anxiously trying to compound the foulness of their crime in the paradoxical hope it will bring them liberty.

The hearing into the amnesty applications of Clive Derby-Lewis and Janusz Walus, who killed the South African Communist party leader, Chris Hani, in 1993, was marked last week by their efforts to persuade the commissioners that their crime was not some aberration born of passion, but a ruthlessly premeditated attempt to cause thousands more deaths by bringing civil war on the country.

The curious reversal of the normal thrust of criminal defence is demanded by the enabling legislation, which requires a political mandate for an atrocity to earn amnesty.

Like Galileo before the Inquisition, Archbishop Desmond Tutu's commissioners seek not proof of the deed, but confession of heresy — the sanctity of confession offering reconciliation through forgiveness. It is no coincidence that the chairman and vice-chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission are churchmen.

Watching the determined face of Hani's widow, Limpho, as her counsel battles to find a technicality to keep his killers in jail, you cannot help but question whether reconciliation is desirable.

Similarly, when listening to Joseph Seremane, one questions whether the truth is discoverable. Mr Seremane, a highly regarded veteran of the anti-apartheid struggle, was the head of the justice department of the South African Council of Churches.

In recognition of his contributions to the liberation cause, he was appointed chairman of the Land Claims Commission, which compensates those dispossessed by apartheid's segregation laws.

He came before the commission recently to demand justice, not from the whites but from the liberation movement: his brother was executed by the African National Congress.

Mr Seremane said his brother had joined the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto weSizwe, after the 1976 Soweto uprising. "Chief" Timothy, who had risen to rank of commander in the guerrilla army, was tortured and shot along with 12 others accused of being "spies" after an insurrection by combatants in protest at being forced to fight for the Angolan government against Jonas Savimbi's Unita movement.

Mr Seremane said he had submitted affidavits taken from his brother's two friends — one now a police officer in the new South Africa, the other a soldier — to an ANC inquiry into the camps scandal, but they had never been acknowledged, or returned. Instead, an attempt had been made to kill one of the witnesses.

He had appealed to Nelson Mandela, getting as far as his secretary. "She just said many people had phoned to speak to the president about similar matters and I should speak to the Truth Commission."

The affidavits make horrific reading. They charge that among his brother's torturers was ANC member Sipho Mthembu, now a top official in the national intelligence agency, the South African internal security service.

One witness, Goitseone Gordon Moshoeu, said ANC officials, including South Africa's present minister of defence, Joe Modise, organised a kangaroo court at Quatro in 1983. "In the court an inmate could not speak. We were called one after the other to simply come to receive our sentences." He got four years with hard labour, while 13 others were sentenced to death, including Chief.

"This group was all executed by firing squad in a valley that lies behind Quatro. It is in this valley where the bones of our sons and daughters of our motherland are thrown," Mr Moshoeu said.

It is a charge against the forces of liberation which, one suspects, will be enjoined by no confession.

Stealth proves a washout

Tim Radford

AMERICA'S ultimate secret weapon has just one flaw. It becomes less secret when wet.

A report from the US Congress general accounting office — revealed in New Scientist last week — says that the B-2 stealth bomber's radar invisibility quickly deteriorates when the plane is left out in the rain or exposed to heat or humidity.

Stealth has so far cost $43 billion. Its fuselage is designed to scatter radar waves and is covered with a special coating of radar-absorbent paint.

But every time Stealth flies, the paint needs to be repaired. After the repair, the aircraft needs to be left in a cool place so the paint can "cure". One place the US Air Force cannot leave its big new baby is outside: the paint, says the congressional report, cannot take the heat and washes off in the rain.

So the B-2 bombers — 21 should be in service by 1999 — will need special air-conditioned hangars. This could create a problem if Stealth were ever required to go on active service abroad.

This is the latest twist in the tortured story of what it takes to paint a bomber out of sight. Northrop Grumman Corporation, makers of the B-2, last month let it slip that ordinary commercial paint stripper would not only remove its invisibility, it might also remove the plane.

The B-2 is made from carbon composites that would be easily damaged by a household product. The plane's paint must be stripped off by a wheat starch.

MPs agree Iran cabinet

Kathy Evans

AFTER two days of acrimonious debate, Iran's parliament bowed to the wind of change blowing through the country and approved a liberal-dominated cabinet put forward by the new president, Mohammed Khatami.

Most of the debate involved the appointment of Ayatollah Mohajerani as cultural affairs minister. He is a known liberal with contacts in the intellectual community.

Conservative clerics in parliament asked Mr Mohajerani whether he would kill Salman Rushdie if he ever met him. He was also accused of supporting the establishment of relations with Washington, and encouraging Western influences in Iran.

Mr Mohajerani replied by outlining his ideas for a new, tolerant Islamic culture. "I disagree with almost all of the present practices in the culture ministry. We have to provide an atmosphere for creativity, tranquillity and freedom," he said.

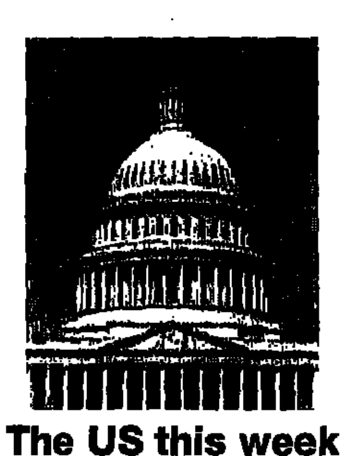
His speech appeared to herald a new era of cultural freedom for Iranian writers and media organisations.

Changes were also expected on the foreign policy front, with the nomination of Kamal Kharrazi as foreign minister. He has spent most of his academic and diplomatic life in the United States.

There were also expectations that relations with Europe could be repaired. Relations with European Union countries other than Greece and Italy have been poor since a Berlin court accused the Iranian leadership of involvement in the deaths of three dissidents.

"I'm sure there will be changes, because everyone knows Iran needs Europe, and Europe needs Iran," said one commentator.

Teamsters prove unions can deliver



The US this week

Martin Walker

ONE OF the most familiar sights on American streets is the box-shaped brown van of United Parcel Service. The brown-uniformed drivers wheel their trolleys of boxes and parcels in and out of every building in the country. It is a rare day when our own friendly UPS driver does not bring books or fax paper or courier letters into the Guardian's Washington office and brandish his hand-held computer for us to sign. Last week, after 15 days on strike, he returned with a beam on his face as a living symbol of the most signal trade union victory the United States has seen in two decades.

After two weeks on strike, the Teamsters union, which represents 185,000 UPS workers, won virtually all their demands. They will not have to put their pensions into a UPS-run scheme. They get pay rises and profit-sharing. Above all, they appear to have turned the tide in what the Teamsters said was "the long campaign to casualise the American work force". Full-time employees, who get pension rights and medical benefits, are expensive. They also earn more. At UPS, the full-time drivers before the strike made $19.95 an hour. Part-timers averaged $11 an hour. Full-time workers will now get a pay rise of $3.10 an hour over five years, and part-timers will get a rise of $4.10. Sub-contracting of labour will be phased out, except for peak holiday periods. Most importantly, UPS has agreed to turn 10,000 part-time jobs into full-time positions.

This single issue helps to explain the extraordinary outpouring of public sympathy for the UPS strikers. One CNN opinion poll showed 82 per cent public support for their attack on part-time work. The airline pilots union agreed to honour the UPS picket lines. The AFL-CIO trade union confederation offered to help out with $10 million a week in strike pay. The Teamsters organised a global day of action in support of the UPS strikers, thanks to a conference it held with European trade unions in May. European unions mounted their own picket lines and held rallies for the strike.

UPS has more than 1.6 million business customers, and delivers about 80 per cent of all the parcels in the world's biggest economy. Computers, mail order clothes, durable goods, school books and supplies, prosthetic limbs and just about anything you can name is trundled to the customers by this single company, which last year made a profit of $1.15 billion. The company estimates that the strike cost it some $650 million in lost business, and that the new contract with the Teamsters will cost it $200 million a year.

"This strike clearly signals something new," said Robert Reich, President Clinton's first-term labour secretary. "We have not seen anything like this in recent years. Labour unions have typically been making wage concessions as corporations downsize. This is something of a watershed."

This rare victory for an American union also points to the deep unease many still feel about job security and employment benefits even while the country revels in its sixth year of economic boom. The Teamsters rallied behind the slogan "Part-time America doesn't work", and found a strong current of public sympathy, even though part-time work in the US economy has grown only modestly. Part-timers accounted for 14 per cent of the US labour force 30 years ago, and just short of 19 per cent today, according to labour department figures.

This victory comes after several decades of union decline. In 1945, more than 36 per cent of all non-farm workers in the US were union members. After the industrial restructuring and erosion of traditional heavy industries and labour-intensive factories that have battered trade unions across the world since then, only 14.6 per cent of current American workers belong to a union. The figure remains that high only because of the public sector — federal and state civil servants and municipal employees are still heavily unionised. In the private sector, only one worker in 10 is a union member.

Two further reasons can be found to explain the enfeeblement of the labour movement in the US. The first was the degree to which organised labour had become identified in the public mind with organised crime, not least in the Teamsters union, which along with two other unions was expelled from the AFL-CIO for corruption in 1957.

There were historical reasons for this, which date back to the 1930s, when employers routinely hired teams of toughs to break strikes and picket lines. Looking for some muscle of their own, the unions found a lot of semi-employed thugs in search of new careers after the easy pickings of the Prohibition era.

In the docks, and transport and waste disposal industries, organised crime made enduring inroads. Jimmy Hoffa, the legendary Teamsters leader who was the target of the Kennedy brothers' corruption inquiries in the 1950s and 1960s, disappeared in what has long been assumed to have been a Mafia hit.

More recently, elections in the mineworkers' union have been punctuated by shootings and explosions, and the federal courts have repeatedly intervened to require and to supervise honest elections. Indeed, despite his image as the reformist Mr Clean of the once-grubby Teamsters, Ron Carey's own narrow re-election victory last year, when he defeated the son of Jimmy Hoffa, was last week struck down by the courts and a new election demanded. One of Carey's aides faces criminal charges of illegal fund-raising. Another is co-operating with the inquiry. Carey's chances in the new Teamsters' election will not be hurt by last week's victory.

The years of Senate hearings and court cases into labour union corruption has made it hard for unions to recruit new members. Union campaigns have been greeted with understandable suspicion. A low point was reached in 1981, when President Reagan's new administration intervened to declare illegal the strike of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association, an act symbolised by the TV and press photographs of strikers in handcuffs. The memory of that deep humiliation remains vivid among modern trade unionists.

"I remember in the 1980s when the air traffic controllers union was wiped out," Carey recalled after last week's victory. "For 15 years after that, employers all across the country cut jobs, cut pensions, cut health coverage and stepped on workers' rights. Working people were on the run. But not any more. This strike marks a new era: American workers are on the move again."

"This is a wake-up call for corporate America. This is a fight for the future," enthused the AFL-CIO president, John Sweeney, who with Carey and former Mineworkers' leader Richard Trumka represents the new generation of union leaders. They reckon that the years of retreat and defensiveness are over.

We shall not have long to wait to see if they are right. The Teamsters are now stepping up their campaign to unionise the 110,000 workers in the Federal Express courier and delivery group. The United Auto Workers are redoubling their efforts to make the first, crucial breakthrough into Japanese auto plants in the US by winning a union representation ballot at the Nissan plant in Tennessee. One of the attractions of Tennessee for Nissan was that like many Southern and Western states it had a "right-to-work" law that limits union sway, thus making the state an attractive base to potential employers. So the struggle at Tennessee and the new campaign which the AFL-CIO is aiming at the construction industry in Nevada point to a new determination by the unions to lay down a challenge in the very regions where they have been most weak.

An even bigger tussle is looming. Next month, President Clinton will seek to get "fast-track" authorisation from Congress to allow him to negotiate an extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement to Chile, and eventually to Argentina. The unions oppose this, and so does Democrat Congressional leader Dick Gephardt, the man most likely to challenge Vice-President Al Gore for the party's presidential nomination in 2000. Gore, like Clinton, strongly supports Nafta. Internal Democratic politics will be racked, and could well be defined, by the fast-track debate.

'What we have is a more aggressive labour movement. Whether we have a more effective one remains to be seen' — *Michael Baroody of the National Association of Manufacturers*

A time of general prosperity and record stock prices on Wall Street may be the most hospitable period for new union militancy. Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, has told Congress that the main reason for the current low inflation rate has been the restraint of workers in seeking pay rises to match at least some of the increased profits of corporations and Wall Street. That restraint was the product of fear for their jobs, Greenspan told the US Senate budget committee on January 21.

In this context, the implications of the UPS strike victory, and of a re-invigorated trade union movement, could be profound. Or as Greenspan told the same Senate committee in February last year, "suppressed wage cost growth as a consequence of job insecurity can be carried only so far. At some point in the future, the trade-off of subdued wage growth for job security has to come to an end."

The real question is whether the UPS strike signals a turning point in the US, where over the past few decade Marxists would say that the forces of capital have enjoyed their clearest strategic victory over the forces of labour. If so, the Teamsters' victory could be seen as a transatlantic parallel to the French election verdict this summer that brought a Socialist-Communist coalition to power with promises of job creation and job protection.

There is a danger in reading too much into the UPS strike. It was a company offering a service unusually vulnerable to strike action, and the management's behaviour was ham-fisted to say the least. A company spokesman used to dismiss Carey's speeches and the Teamsters' carefully planned media campaign as "nothing more than posturing". When one of Carey's rallies in Atlanta was sparsely attended in May, a UPS corporate spokesman sniffed: "They are trying to stage a Broadway production of Les Miserables, and what we are seeing is a high-school production of Annie Get Your Gun."

But there were so many of those rallies, and Carey's cross-country campaign focused on the opinion poll-tested message about the threat of part-time work. The union planned, prepared and waged a thoroughly modern and media-savvy strike. Future managements have been warned.

"What we have is a more aggressive labour movement," commented Michael Baroody, of the National Association of Manufacturers. "Whether we have a more effective one remains to be seen."

There is one last lesson from this strike. Clinton did not intervene to demand a cooling-off period, as the UPS management seems to have assumed he would. Indeed, his new labour secretary, Alexis Herman, played the role of mediator with great skill, even checking into the hotel where the union-management talks were being held to signal her determination to see it through when the talks broke off. She dispatched her department's top economist to brief both sides on the costs and implications of the various compromises being discussed.

The Clinton administration behaved responsibly and even-handedly, but also remembered that they were Democrats, and refused to intervene in a way that would have blunted the Teamsters' campaign. (That said, Clinton did intervene last week to impose a 60-day cooling-off period to prevent a strike on Amtrak railroads.) Still, the Guardian's own UPS delivery man, who voted twice for Clinton despite some reservations, is now happy that he did.

Washington Post, page 19

Orthodoxy enters the Middle East equation

Julian Borger in Bnei Brak

ISRAEL'S remorseless demographic currents lapped up to the gates of Remez school last week in the shape of four men with skull-caps and tape-measures. Fuming, Ilana Tauber ran out to confront them in the playground.

They were unimpressed. They sauntered by the headmistress with smiles and nods. "We've come to divide your school," the foreman said.

It was a precise description of their job. By order of Bnei Brak municipality, Remez school is to be divided by a high metal fence. One half is to be handed over to the suburb's rapidly expanding ultra-Orthodox, or Haredim, population. The school's 250 pupils, mostly children of secular parents, will be confined to the other half. Mrs Tauber's office will be moved to what is now a tool-shed.

Beneath a cardboard collage celebrating a century of Zionism, secular Israel confronted Orthodox Israel and lost.

"Nobody calls me," Mrs Tauber remonstrated. "It shows a terrible lack of consultation. How, then, are we supposed to live together?"

The workmen continued measuring the ground. The whole point of their task was that the two sides should not live together. The Haredim do not like their kids to mix.

"The only way is to live apart," said Abraham Schvade, the most talkative of the fence-makers. "Otherwise, they will always fight. Here they'll fight for 2,000 years over whether you can open the refrigerator door on the Sabbath."

All Mrs Tauber had left was one bitter parting shot. "Every break I'll play records full volume — I'll make life hell for them," she yelled at the workmen.

The Haredim now make up 12 per cent of the Israeli population, and they have a much higher birth rate than secular Jews. In Bnei Brak, the secular have become a small minority. The streets of the Tel-Aviv suburb are dark with the black hats and frock coats of the male faithful. There is also an unusual number of prams and pushchairs, propelled by women in long-sleeved dresses and bonnets.

Barry Rabinowitz, a 42-year-old in a black suit and fedora, sees nothing wrong with splitting Remez school. "We don't want our children open to outside influences, especially in the early years. The population of religious people is growing all the time, so I guess it's a good thing to do."

Segregated bus routes have also been proposed in Jerusalem, where the Haredim have a stronger hold. The number of children in Haredi schools has increased by 49 per cent in the past four years, while the secular school population has grown by only 3 per cent.

Part of the explosive growth is due to birth rates. But Dov Elbaum, a journalist on the Yediot Aharanot newspaper, argues that a more important factor in the growth of Orthodoxy is the return to religion of young Jews, especially from poor families of Middle Eastern (Sephardic) origin, who form another 30 per cent of the population.

"The numbers are growing and growing every year and it's not going to stop," Mr Elbaum said.



Haredi children study the Torah at Bible school in a suburb of Jerusalem PHOTOGRAPH: TOM STODDART

"Israel is going to become a very conservative, religious state in the next few years."

Liberals have tried to fight the threat of Orthodox influence, leading to ferocious spats. Fights broke out and cars were stoned when ultra-Orthodox Jews forcibly closed a busy Jerusalem thoroughfare on the Sabbath last year.

On two occasions this summer men and women who attempted to pray together — contrary to Orthodoxy — at Jerusalem's sacred Western Wall were spat at and denounced as "Nazis" by Haredi youths.

The buses look likely to become the new battleground. Last week, a group of women MPs promised to fight segregation.

As in Bnei Brak, the liberals are unlikely to win for the foreseeable future. The ultra-Orthodox National Religious Party and the Sephardic-Orthodox Shas party threw their lot in with Binyamin Netanyahu's rightwing government last year.

In return, the Orthodox rabbinate has received state protection. Mr Netanyahu has backed a bill affirming the Orthodox monopoly in religious conversions. This month a police raid on an Orthodox pirate radio station was reportedly abandoned under political pressure. Meanwhile Eli Suissa, the Shas interior minister, is believed to have intervened to push through the division of Remez school.

David Landau, a writer on religion for the Ha'aretz newspaper, argues that this alliance is the most momentous implication of the growth of Orthodoxy — and will affect the Israeli-Palestinian stand-off.

"The basic theological position [of Orthodox rabbis] was always doveish," he said. "Now the national xenophobic factor has insinuated itself. The Orthodox youth are being inculcated with rightwing ideology, providing a future electorate for Netanyahu."

● Israel has raised the possibility of joining the Commonwealth, it was confirmed last week following a private meeting between Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the organisation's secretary-general, and Moshe Raviv, Israel's ambassador to Britain.

Saudi Arabia shake-up urged by Yamani's son

Kathy Evans

SAUDI ARABIA'S ageing royal leaders are about to face the first public criticism of their policies from within the country's élite. The critic is the Hani Ahmed Zaki Yamani, aged 36, son of the former minister, Sheikh Yamani and a member of the growing class of Western-educated millionaire businessmen.

In a book to be published in London, Mr Yamani urges the kingdom's government to allow direct elections to a parliament, better treatment for women and an end to the presence of foreign troops in the country. His comments come at a time of growing concern about the health of the Saudi monarch, King Fahd, and reports of a palace struggle between senior members of the Al Sauds about the family's future leadership.

To Be A Saudi, to be published in November by Janus Publishing, is couched in constant expressions of loyalty to the king, the Al Sauds and their form of Islamic government. But in between these laudatory comments, Mr Yamani criticises growing corruption, the country's reliance on foreigners in defence, the ban on women driving cars and the excesses of religious police.

Until now, the only dissent to the Al Sauds' dominance of the Arab world's most powerful government has come from militant Islamists. Saudi liberals and modernists have been silent for decades, believing the royal family to be the most effective bulwark against Islamic extremism. This new generation voiced their criticisms only in private. Most spent lengthy periods of the year abroad, escaping the social restrictions of their own country.

The most daring change Mr Yamani has urged is direct elections. At present, Saudi Arabia has a powerless Consultative Council or Shoura consisting of 90 members appointed by the king. All the members are men. "The next step would be to have the members of the Shoura elected directly by the population, enabling them to truly represent the feelings of the majority in an advisory role and in an independent non-partisan manner," writes Mr Yamani.

The Shoura, he adds, must have clear powers and functions to increase communication between government and people. Such a system must also extend to municipalities and local government.

Mr Yamani's comments are all the more sensitive because he comes from one of the kingdom's most prominent families. His father was the first commoner to be oil minister. And his sister, Mai Yamani, is an academic at London's School of Oriental and African Studies. She has notched up a reputation as one of Saudi Arabia's most outspoken feminists.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Interest rate rises fail to dent consumer boom

SPENDING in Britain's high streets was found last week to be growing faster than anywhere in the world. Over the year to the end of July retail sales rose by 6.5 per cent — well above City expectations — and prompted fears of an over-heating economy and another round of interest-rate rises.

Having upped base rates four times since the general election, the Bank of England is so far resisting further increases beyond 7 per cent, probably because analysts are unsure about the causes of the boom. Most of it is undoubtedly due to the demutualisation of building societies, which have given savers windfalls totalling £35 billion in recent months. But other forces may also be at play.

The Paymaster-General, Geoffrey Robinson, thought the fine weather was encouraging people to spend. "They're having a good time, they're enjoying themselves," he said.

Other figures suggest that the steady fall in unemployment, and a 4 per cent increase in real wages and salaries over the past year, is making consumers more willing to spend and to borrow and, in general, bringing back the "feel-good factor" which so eluded John Major's government. The Liberal Democrat treasury spokesman, Malcolm Bruce, blamed the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, for failing to douse the flames of consumer spending in his July Budget.

There are clear differences between now and the damaging boom years of the late 1980s. But there are also just enough similarities to engender a sense of unease that four interest rate rises may not be enough to nudge spending and money supply figures down to a more comfortable level.

A WOMAN who has been a vegetarian for 12 years was confirmed as having the new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) which has been linked to BSE or "mad cow disease".

The case of Clare Tomkins, aged 24, raised the possibility that the small number of CJD deaths — 22 so far — may merely reflect infection from before 1986, when BSE was officially identified in cattle.

It also revived suggestions, earlier discounted, that the infection could be passed on by milk, cheese or gelatin. Miss Tomkins, of Tonbridge, Kent, was not a vegan and did eat cheese and drank milk. The long incubation period in her case also indicates that the incidence of CJD has yet to peak.

RESULTS of the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations showed another small increase of 0.4 per cent in the number of passes at grades A to C. The proportion of candidates passing at this level has increased every year since the GCSE was introduced in 1986 and now stands at 54.4 per cent.

The Government is planning to put even greater emphasis on the upper grades by setting a national target to raise the proportion of 16-year-olds who pass at least five papers at this level. Teachers complained that this would damage the interests of the less able, who could not achieve higher grades.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that the Government's obsession with the more able candidates would encourage teachers to forget low achievers and so "contribute to the growth of an underclass, the socially excluded whom Labour is now urgently seeking to rescue".

GERRY ADAMS, the leader of Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, was due this week to meet the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, and is expecting soon to meet the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, thus confirming that the IRA's second ceasefire has been solid enough to warrant Sinn Fein's inclusion in the all-party talks on the future of the province, which begin on September 15.

Earlier, Unionists and loyalist politicians had reacted angrily to the news that 13 paramilitary prisoners in English jails are to enjoy less restricted regimes after having their security status downgraded.

Though the downgrading had been called for by Mr Adams, the Prison Service insisted that the decision had been an operational one, and that the Home Office had merely been "informed".

THE GOVERNMENT'S flagship plans for Scottish devolution suffered another blow when business leaders came out in open revolt against the proposals, which are to be put to a referendum in September.

Scottish Financial Enterprise, representing leading banks, insurers, accountants and lawyers, warned that the tax-raising powers set out in the devolution white paper for the Edinburgh parliament would endanger investment and jobs and lead to a "brain drain" to England.

Sir Bruce Pattullo, governor of the Bank of Scotland, warned voters that they could be worse off by £6 a week if the proposed parliament chose to raise taxes. The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who was campaigning for a "yes" vote in the referendum, told Sir Bruce to "play around with your money and leave us to get on with our politics".



Milking the occasion . . . The Conservative party leader, William Hague (pictured with fiancée Ffion Jenkins) made a pitch for the elusive Caribbean youth vote when he became the first senior political leader to visit the Notting Hill Carnival in its 32-year history. Whistle and coconut in hand, he joined the 700,000-strong crowd which braved the rain on Bank Holiday Monday after a sunny Children's Carnival on Sunday. The attendance was lower than last year because of the weather PHOTOGRAPH: KIERAN DOHERTY

NHS waiting lists up 13pc

Chris Mihill

HOSPITAL waiting lists increased by nearly 13 per cent over the past year, one of the steepest rises since the NHS was set up, official statistics published last week show. Nearly 1.2 million people are waiting for treatment.

The Government blamed the rise on Conservative underspending and said the queues were likely to grow over coming months.

The Health Minister, Alan Milburn, said that hospitals would be given an early allocation of the extra money promised for the next financial year to help them cope.

But opposition parties and the British Medical Association said separate money should be provided now, rather than digging into funds meant for next year.

The statistics show that the number waiting at the end of June to be admitted to NHS hospitals in England was 1.19 million, an increase of 12.9 per cent since June 1996.

The number of patients waiting more than a year has risen by 36,600 since the end of June last year.

Under the Patient's Charter, patients must be admitted within 18 months of going on the waiting list. At June 30, 388 patients had been waiting longer than 18 months, compared with 150 patients at the end of March and nine at the end of June 1996.

Mr Milburn said the new figures confirmed the "appalling legacy" left to the NHS by the Conservatives, and were the sixth quarterly rise since September 1995.

"Record NHS waiting lists and longer waiting times are the price patients have paid for the squandering of precious NHS resources on running the Tories' internal market," he said.

John Maples, Conservative health spokesman, said: "The figures show that the Government is likely to break its key election pledge to reduce NHS waiting lists by 100,000. The Government is exacerbating the problem by increasing costs and reducing efficiency".

MoD homes sale 'shameful'

MICHAEL Portillo, the former defence secretary, was in the centre of a new row after an official report revealed last week that he wasted £139 million of taxpayers' money in a £1.7 billion sale of servicemen's homes to a Japanese-led consortium, *write David Fairhall and David Hencke.*

The Defence Minister, James Spellar, made a personal attack on Mr Portillo, saying: "This report shows the validity of the criticisms that Labour made in opposition, namely that this was a bad deal for the taxpayer and a bad deal for the Ministry of Defence."

Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat defence spokesman, said: "This damning report shows that the privatisation of service housing was the sale of the century."

Bruce George, Labour chairman of the all-party Commons defence select committee, condemned the action as the "most shameful and stupid decision" of the last Tory government.

The National Audit Office revealed that Mr Portillo knew from his department's own figures that over 25-30 years it would have paid to retain ownership, selling only quarters that were surplus to need. The present value to the armed forces of owning their own housing, plus the proceeds of selling off the surplus, is between £77 million and £139 million more than the sale price.

Ministers to review asylum procedures

James Meikle

THE Government last week launched a root-and-branch review of the assessment of asylum seekers after a riot at a detention centre.

The immigration minister, Mike O'Brien, admitted the backlog of more than 52,000 cases was "unacceptably high" but dismissed claims from within his service that more than 40,000 asylum seekers had "vanished" into the community in recent years.

A leading member of the Immigration Service Union, which claims about 2,200 members, suggested asylum seekers should be held in reception centres where assessments could be made in weeks rather than the years which are commonplace.

Only a small proportion are held in centres such as Campsfield House, near Kidlington, Oxfordshire, where detainees were last week involved in the fifth riot at a detention centre in recent months. Campaign groups involved with asylum seekers said such disturbances were inevitable unless conditions improved. Mr O'Brien said the entire system would be investigated in an interdepartmental review this autumn.

Asylum seekers who did not apply on entry lost benefits under the previous government, but local authorities are running up huge bills in housing and feeding them.

John Tincey, research director for the ISU, suggested setting up new secure centres, where there would be medical reports, lawyers, counsellors, and even appeal courts.

Rachel Rees of the Refugee Council agreed the system was not working, but said: "The proposals to develop what would be detention centres by any other name would be equally inhumane. The solution has to make the process fair, effective and efficient."

MPs to question MI5 over secret files

Richard Norton Taylor, Owen Bowcott and Michael White

MI5 IS to be questioned by a cross-party committee of MPs about secret files it holds on tens of thousands of individuals, including prominent politicians, following the disclosure that it bugged Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, and monitored the activities of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

The disclosure that Mr Mandelson, the Prime Minister's close confidant, had his telephone tapped by MI5 for three years in the 1970s because of his alleged Communist sympathies, was made last Sunday by David Shayler, a former Sunday Times journalist who left MI5 five months ago after six years in the security service.

He told the Mail on Sunday newspaper that according to MI5's file, Mr Mandelson had been a member of the Young Communist League in 1972, joining the Communist Party of Great Britain a year later. "He was active in student politics at Oxford and his MI5 notes were full of titbits about his student days," Mr Shayler says. He describes the telephone tap on Mr Mandelson as "an act of pure paranoia".

Mr Shayler also said that Mr Straw was deemed to be a "Communist sympathiser" merely because he was president of the National Union of Students between 1969 and 1971 and an activist at Leeds university at a time when the Communist party was an influential voice in student politics.

Among others said to have been targeted was the Guardian's deputy foreign editor, Victoria Brittain. Her telephone was allegedly bugged and a plan hatched to search her house.

Ms Brittain was said by Mr Shayler to have become the victim of an extraordinary surveillance operation by MI5 which started in late 1993. It was based on the suspicion — which MI5 later admitted to be groundless — that she was involved in laundering money for Libya.

Mr Mandelson denounced MI5 and the Mail on Sunday for a "pure smear" and insisted that he was not a member of the Communist party. He said: "It is the muddle and incompetence that is amazing. This is an attempt by a Conservative-supporting newspaper to smear me and damage the Government."

Ms Brittain's solicitors, Bindman and Partners, said in a statement: "We are assured by our client that she has never to her knowledge received any money at any time from Libya, either for her personal use or for any other purpose." They suggested that MI5's activities appear to be a clear breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. Ms Brittain intends formally to complain to the MI5 complaints tribunal.

Alan Rusbridger, the editor of the Guardian, said he would demand an official explanation from MI5 and called for Ms Brittain to be granted access to her private file given the amount of apparently misleading information in it.

Senior Tory MPs predicted that Mr Shayler's action will leave MI5 with little alternative but to prosecute their dissident ex-colleague, not least to discourage others who might be tempted to talk.

The disclosures will embarrass MI5 management, which has been struggling recently to present a new image to the outside world. MI5 says it devotes only a very small proportion of its resources to countering "subversives". However, it had admitted that it holds files on hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Families suffer appalling conditions

Jeremy Lennard

NURSE Constanshaw Weekes is aged 21. Her story of life in the Brades shelter — one of only four purpose-built shelters on the island — is an example of how some Montserratians have suffered.

Her family arrived at the shelter on April 3 last year, and were housed in a large open-plan room with 14 other people. Like others in their position, they found it impossible to survive on the vouchers given out by the government. Despite her income, her father was forced off the island in search of work.

While he was away, a single male alcoholic was moved in to their room. On February 2 this year, it is alleged that Mr Weekes returned home to find the drunk lifting the skirts of his youngest daughter. A tussle ensued and in the hours that followed Mr Weekes suffered a heart attack and died. Mrs Weekes left the island to escape life at the shelter.

Constanshaw loves Montserrat and finds it hard to contemplate a life elsewhere. But her will has been broken. "Our home has been taken by the volcano; this room is all we have."

There are two other purpose-built shelters in Salem and one adjacent to the heliport. In August 1995, several hundred people were moved from the slopes around the volcano and housed in this emergency shelter. The accommodation was intended for a week at the most, but they are still there, living in plastic, windowless hangar tents in which families of four and more are allocated an area 8ft by 8ft.

In some shelters there is only one toilet for every 50 people. Swarms of flies and mosquitoes plague the area. There is no adequate sewerage system.

Conditions are no better for those housed in churches and schools.

"These cases represent a degree of social disintegration and neglect which need never have come about. It borders on the criminal," said a local.



Charlotte Ryan, one of fewer than 20 islanders who accepted the official aid package, takes her leave of the shelters and boards the ferry for Antigua PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN McCONNICO

Girls' jail ban widens to all youths

Vikram Dodd

THE Prison Service is facing turmoil after it emerged last week that a High Court ruling preventing women under 21 from being sent to adult jails may apply to young male offenders as well.

Two High Court judges ruled that it was wrong for a 16-year-old girl to be held in an adult prison, overturning long-standing Home Office policy.

Prison Service sources confirmed that they expected the ruling would apply to young men as well. As many as 1,500 males under 21, imprisoned in adult jails, would also have to be moved out.

Senior Prison Service officials were reported to be "close to panic" about the High Court's decision. The consequences of the written judgment could be young offenders in adult jails filling claims for compensation. There have been calls for those affected to be freed on bail until suitable places can be found.

Far more males than women under 21 are held in adult jails, and prison reformers predicted the ruling would cause chaos as all suitable places for young offenders are either full or already above capacity. The decision would mean that the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, would have to find the money for new special places out of his existing budget, or seek fresh funds from the Treasury.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "The Prison Service will have to make alternative arrangements on reception into prisons for several hundred boys and about 70 girls. It will throw them into chaos for at least six or seven weeks."

Mr Fletcher said the Prison Service would be scrambling to open up more suitable places and hire staff. He predicted the cost could run into several hundred thousand pounds.

Paul Cavadino, principal officer for the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said: "This will mean either the further overcrowding of young offenders' institutions or creating alternative accommodation. The judgment will apply to both sexes. The only question is how many young males are not being held in young offenders institutions."

The ruling followed a judicial review brought on behalf of a 16-year-old girl convicted of robbery. She spent 15 days in Risley Prison, Cheshire, on assessment before being released on bail.

Couple fined over rape lies

A BRITISH couple who made a false claim of rape in Cyprus in an attempt to gain holiday insurance compensation walked free from jail, *writes Sarah Hall.*

Susan Warburton, aged 30, and her boyfriend, Paul Shearsmith, 26, were each fined £400 at the district court in Larnaca after spending the weekend in prison. "It's a great relief to be going home," Warburton said.

The couple pleaded guilty to public mischief and conspiracy charges. They had claimed that Warburton was raped by the son of their hotel owner. Judge Michalis Christodoulou said an innocent man had had his name blackened so that the couple could try to claim insurance money.

In Brief

BRITISH Petroleum withdrew its $2.2 million damages claim against Greenpeace, unfreezing the environmental group's bank accounts after a hostile public reaction.

Silencing critics, page 25

THE Metropolitan police is investigating relationships between private detectives and serving officers in connection with the alleged sale of confidential police information.

TOMMY GRAHAM, the MP for Renfrewshire West accused of smearing a colleague, Gordon McMaster, who committed suicide, was suspended from the Parliamentary Labour party for reasons "unrelated to Mr McMaster's death".

A RETIRED schoolteacher, Gordon Park, has been charged with murder after the body of his wife was found trussed and weighed down in Coniston Water, Cumbria, 21 years after she disappeared.

POLICE investigating the death of Thomas Marshall, a 12-year-old boy from Norfolk, said his case could be related to three other unsolved murders in the area.

THE Metropolitan Police paid a total of £80,000 to three men who a court heard were beaten up by police and had falsified cases made against them. The officers concerned denied liability.

A BRITISH Airways pilot and co-pilot have been suspended after a five-year-old girl allegedly operated the controls of a packed Boeing 757 jet.

ONE of the great sea mysteries looks likely to be solved following the discovery in the Barents Sea of the wreck of the Hull trawler Gaul, which disappeared 23 years ago on what may have been a spying mission.

THORP, the £2.3 billion nuclear reprocessing plant at Sellafield in Cumbria, has finally been given a safety licence by the Health and Safety Executive — three and a half years after it began operating.

BE HERE NOW, the third album by the pop group Oasis, broke chart records by selling 356,000 copies on its first day of release.

ROY JAMES, one of the great train robbers and once London's best-known getaway driver, has died aged 62.

FATHER Brendan Smith, the Roman Catholic priest jailed for paedophile crimes on both sides of the Irish border, died after an apparent heart attack.

Fill this space . . . design and technology companies specialising in computers and multimedia have been asked to finalise proposals for inside the dome PHOTO: EAMONN O'MAHONY

Millennium Dome signed but not yet sealed

Guardian Reporters

PETER MANDELSON, the Minister without Portfolio, has decided to abandon a controversial German PVC covering for the Millennium Dome, being built in London to mark the year 2000, and switch to a more environmentally-friendly glass fibre and Teflon covering.

Government sources insisted that the switch to a covering made by the Japanese-owned American company Birdair, at a cost of £8 million, was mainly being made to boost the chances of the structure becoming permanent and leaving an "enduring legacy", rather than for ecological reasons.

But environmental campaigners were cock-a-hoop that their warnings of disruption to the Millennium Experience if the Government persisted with what Greenpeace called a "toxic plastic throwaway monster" appeared to have met with a positive response.

The decision to abandon the PVC was taken by the Millennium Experience board, but followed the intervention of Mr Mandelson, who has had two meetings with Greenpeace to defuse the criticisms and planned protests.

Meanwhile the directors of Koch Hightex, the German company contracted to build a glass fibre skin for the dome before the decision to use a PVC covering, are to demand more than £2 million in compensation for cancellation of their £8 million deal, which was signed in May.

Contracts for the final phase of the Millennium Dome are expected to be finalised over the next few weeks, determining what activities will be on offer in the arena.

About 20 design and technology companies, specialising in the Internet, virtual reality and other forms of multimedia and computer entertainment, have been selected by the New Millennium Experience Company, which is running the £750 million project, and told to finalise their proposals for exhibitions and entertainment in the dome.

The centrepiece will be a 10,000-seat drum arena that will host a multimedia laser show to be produced by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the producer of West End musicals, and theatre director John Napier.

The first of the dome's 12 support masts, which are about 100 metres high, has arrived on site and is expected to be erected in the next few weeks. Two other masts are near completion and are due to arrive on site in early October.

A spokeswoman for the New Millennium Experience Company said: "Our main emphasis is now on deciding what will go on inside the dome. The handing out of contracts for the major construction work has already been done and work is ahead of schedule.

"We have not yet finalised the entertainment but the emphasis will be on modern technology. We want to keep an element of mystery and not give away too much, but it will be things linked to the Internet, virtual reality and other forms of entertainment that reflect the millennium. We have had a lot of interest from designers and conceptual companies which are all up to date with the latest technology."

The company has awarded about 20 construction contracts so far, from land surveying to lightning protection and ventilation. All have gone to British companies except the contract to clad the dome.

Another 20 minor contracts, worth under £700,000 each, have yet to be awarded.

Construction of the dome is expected to be completed by the middle of next year and then the arena, the size of two Wembley stadiums, will be handed over to the hi-tech companies that will provide the entertainment. They will have at least 12 months to complete their work before the dome's official opening in December 1999.

Should that opening ever occur, it will no doubt come as a huge relief to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Mr Mandelson, who has staked his reputation on its success.

From the moment plans for the dome were unveiled by the Conservative government last October it not only became the focus of national derision but was labelled a huge waste of money, both by the public and several Labour MPs, including Gordon Brown, now the Chancellor.

The Conservatives promised to fund the project with National Lottery money and with the backing of private companies, setting the initial cost at £350 million. By the end of last year the cost had increased to £700 million, which prompted Labour, then in opposition, to cast doubt on its future.

But shortly after Labour's election victory, when the future of the dome was looking bleak, it was given a fresh lease of life with Labour's approval at a cabinet meeting in June and some committed spin-doctoring from Mr Mandelson.

Conservatives' admen to promote exhibition

MAURICE and Charles Saatchi, the advertising agency that spearheaded John Major's failed election campaign, has won the £16 million contract to promote the Millennium Dome, *write David Hencke and Paul Brown.*

The brothers are best known for "Labour isn't working", the slogan that got Margaret Thatcher elected in 1979, and the demon eyes portrayal of Tony Blair last autumn.

The company, which was awarded the contract last week, will draw a fee up to £2.5 million, depending on how many million people visit the exhibition. It will also be responsible for promoting Millennium T-shirts and baseball caps, as well as TV, radio and newspaper advertising and mail-shots.

The decision to bring in a top-level advertising agency was taken by Jenny Page, chief executive of the Millennium Experience, the government-owned company responsible for the project. Unusually, firms were not asked to pitch for advertisements to promote the dome, but were asked for their views about it and what should be in the exhibition.

There was disquiet in the advertising business that the entire application process for the account had been abnormally truncated. When the tender was announced in early July, agencies were given only a week to come up with draft plans, compared with the normal three weeks.

Prescott targets two-car culture

Paul Brown

THE TWO-CAR family was warned it faced extinction last week, after the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, said that the Government would provide a public transport system so efficient that no household would need two vehicles.

Mr Prescott said that people had to be encouraged out of their cars by better public transport, coupled with tolls to use roads and higher parking charges.

Other proposals include a new orbital rail route around London, which would relieve congestion and encourage freight off the roads.

Mr Prescott said his consultation document on transport policy, the precursor to a white paper due out in spring, was not designed to bully people out of their cars. He said he did not intend to simply tax motorists off the road.

"Families have two cars not as a symbol of prosperity but because of the failure of the public transport system," he said. "They do not want to pay two lots of tax and two lots of insurance to keep two cars on the road. If they could reduce it to one car for flexibility and use public transport for the rest of their journeys, they would.

"That will be the test after five years in office. Have we persuaded two-car families to go down to one?"

Other initiatives include charging motorists to use congested roads, taxing company car spaces, encouraging the use of inland waterways to transport freight, and making cycle routes to schools safer.

Links between bus and rail travel would also be improved by integrating timetables and making connections easier. Airports would also be made more accessible.

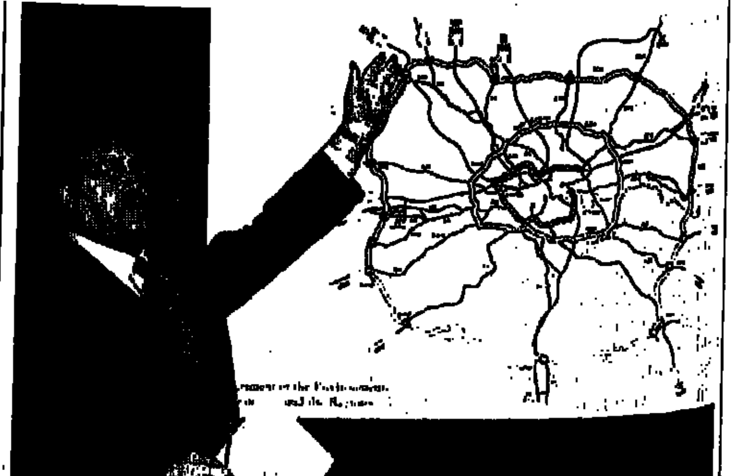
Mr Prescott said that although he was not anti-car, present transport policies could not continue. Almost a fifth of British households possess more than one car, and on present trends the number of cars on the road would increase by 50 per cent in 20 years.

The orbital rail route will mainly use Victorian railway tunnels, with a £120 million link built in east London to complete the circuit.

The link was the brainchild of Mr Prescott in 1990, but he said no one took him seriously then. Now he has ordered London Underground to do a feasibility study.

Mr Prescott said he wanted freight from ports like Felixstowe and Southampton — now grinding towards London in lorries on overcrowded roads — to travel by rail from the ports.

"This is what integrating the transport system is all about," Mr Prescott said. "The tunnels, the trains and the tracks are there. It is just a question of linking them up."



All in the plan: Mr Prescott explains his ideas for transport in London

Transport groups were critical of the plans, saying that they were too vague to spark the huge overhaul needed to save Britain from gridlock and ever-increasing vehicle pollution. The Automobile Association said there was now a need for "tangible proposals".

Roger Higman, from Friends of the Earth, said: "It smacks of prevarication. All the while we are consulting, people are buying more cars and clogging up the roads."

Comment, page 12
Le Monde, page 13

Inquiry to assess drug laws

Duncan Campbell

THE Prince of Wales Trust is to fund a major independent inquiry into Britain's drugs laws. Two of Britain's most senior police officers will sit on the inquiry, which is likely to be seen as an unofficial Royal Commission, the findings of which could well lead to changes in the law.

The inquiry will be under the auspices of the Police Foundation, Britain's leading police think tank and a body respected within the Home Office. The move is seen as a response to a growing feeling that the drugs problem is not being adequately addressed by government.

Viscountess Runciman, who will chair the committee of inquiry, said that it had no brief for any of the sides in the arguments about legalisation. It was neither a covert attempt to advocate legalisation nor an exercise in supporting the existing laws.

It is the first time there has been such a high-powered investigation into drugs laws since the Misuse of Drugs Act was introduced in 1971. The announcement comes a week after a call by the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire, Michael O'Byrne, for a proper debate on drugs.

The inquiry could take two years and is the result of planning and fund-raising which has been taking place over the past 18 months. It was prompted by a call from the Association of Chief Police Officers in 1994 for better research into the effects of enforcing the current laws.

A number of charitable trusts, including the prince's, will contribute to the inquiry's costs. It will hear expert evidence and commission research, publishing briefing papers on different aspects of drug laws in addition to a final report. It will examine whether the current legislation is still appropriate.

The research secretariat will be headed by Joy Mott, the recently-retired Home Office researcher on drug abuse. She has wide contacts across Europe and the United States and will clearly have substantial Home Office experience and links.

Viscountess Runciman, a member of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs from 1974 to 1995 and chairman of the Mental Health Act Commission, said: "The inquiry is not a lobbying exercise on behalf of any of the positions on this subject. It is certainly not a covert attempt to smooth the path to legalisation. Neither is it a device to bolster a law that may be perceived as failing to best serve those it is meant to assist."

The Police Foundation's director, Barrie Irving, said he realised that drug laws were a sensitive issue but he believed that objective review was long overdue.

Lord Harris of Greenwich, the chairman of the foundation's trustees executive committee, said that he believed that the inquiry could tackle questions which were not currently on the political agenda.

● A legal clampdown was due to be launched this week by the Department of Health on the sale of drugs promoted as legal alternatives to cannabis, Ecstasy or LSD.

Those found selling chemicals controlled under the Medicines Act — drugs known as herbal highs which can be harmful and, in certain cases, have proved lethal — will face unlimited fines and up to two years in prison.

"There is a growing need for tough action to tackle the growing craze of targeting vulnerable youngsters," the Health Minister, Alan Milburn, said.

Dow Chemical liable for implant claims

Clare Longrigg

HUNDREDS of British women who have suffered ill health as a result of silicone breast implants have welcomed a ruling by a jury in New Orleans that the Dow Chemical company was guilty of negligence for failing to inform doctors and patients that silicone implants presented serious potential health risks.

The ruling will help them in their fight for compensation.

The hazards that accompany silicone breast implants range from uncomfortable hardening of the implants to pain in the joints and damage to the auto-immune system from leakage. Some women have been confined to wheelchairs as a result.

The ruling is a breakthrough for 1,800 American women who have been locked in a battle for compensation for several years.

The first blow came two years ago when implant manufacturers Dow Corning, which had originally offered $2 billion in compensation, was swamped by applications.

To try to avoid bankruptcy, Dow Corning this week offered to pay more than 200,000 women up to $2.4 billion to settle outstanding claims. The plan requires the approval of a bankruptcy court and a two-thirds majority of women suing the company.

Dow Corning's revised offer is part of a $4.2 billion global settlement offer made by several breast implant makers.

In last week's landmark ruling, the parent company, multinational giant Dow Chemical, was judged liable for injury payments.

A lawyer representing some of the estimated 700 British women affected said the judgment was "very significant". Roger Wicks, an Essex solicitor, said: "Dow Chemical should have shared the information with its subsidiary. They carried out their research in the 1970s, and they knew silicone was dangerous. They didn't pass on that information, therefore they have been judged liable."

It remains for British women to form a pressure group, although many are embarrassed and shy of coming forward.

Settling a debt to the Wall

EGON KRENZ, the man who says he brought down the Berlin Wall, has been sentenced to six-and-a-half years behind a very different sort of wall. This week's verdict in Berlin was both the first and last attempt to bring to justice the East German leadership. Mr Krenz, a bit player till near the end, and his two co-defendants must carry the burden for those who are dead. Attempting to settle accounts with history is always contentious, and this trial raises some familiar questions. Does it discharge a debt to those who died needlessly and perform an act of moral cleansing on behalf of the community? Or is it instead a dubious exercise of retrospective justice by those who "won", which may be flawed legally as well?

Only four killings were at issue in this trial — out of the 263 deaths at the Berlin Wall itself and a further 653 elsewhere. All of those who died in this way should be regarded as innocent victims. It is true that border guards throughout the world are usually armed and are likely to use their weapons. Some of those seeking to cross illegally may be criminals who should be apprehended. Yet in the particular circumstances of divided Germany, most of those fleeing were ordinary citizens who had been denied a right to cross legally. It would be a perversion of human rights to say that they deserved to be shot down for breaking an unjust law — an excuse which even apologists for the old German Democratic Republic (GDR) had scruples about using. Nevertheless when this is measured on a scale of human oppression ranging from the Nazi death camps to Pol Pot's Cambodia, it can hardly be said that this was an act of such massive inhumanity that no further argument is needed about the merits of retrospective legal action.

In considering the case, there is no need to take Mr Krenz at his own evaluation as the man who saved East Germany from bloodshed. The famous decision on November 10, 1989 — for which he claims responsibility — to allow GDR citizens to travel abroad freely was announced almost by accident. It was not intended to open the border crossings immediately: they were then overwhelmed by the popular explosion. Nor is Mr Krenz accurate in taking credit for the authorities' non-violent response to the Leipzig demonstration a month before. The local security police had already decided not to respond with force. Mr Krenz cuts no ice when he seeks to defend the GDR on the grounds that some remnants of idealism still survived: like the rest of eastern Europe, whatever socialism once existed had been irretrievably warped. It is contradicted too by his other claim that the GDR was subservient to the Soviet Union and therefore that Moscow was responsible.

But Mr Krenz's character and credentials are not the issue. The question remains: was this a reasonable charge to bring and a reasonable verdict? Mr Krenz and his co-defendants were to a large extent surrogates for the botched case of Erich Honecker, who was released on grounds of illness and allowed to escape to Chile, where he died. They concurred with, rather than authorised, the long-established practice of shooting-to-kill.

As the judge put it this week, the ruling politburo, led (at the very end) by Mr Krenz, imposed an "ideological line", but there was no explicit order. In terms of law this verdict must be regarded as borderline, although it appears to be welcomed by the majority of German opinion. It is a footnote to history, not a verdict upon it. It is no substitute for trying to come to terms with a difficult and complex past. And it will do nothing to lessen the new divisions between east and west created, perversely, by unification.

Moving at last against the car

THE consultative document issued last week by John Prescott was an invitation to start a real debate on British transport policy, which will lead to a Government white paper in the spring. Technically, nothing has been decided and the document focuses on asking questions, not providing the answers. If no bold decisions are taken in the end, then the whole operation will be another disappointment. But Mr Prescott's evangelical presentation pointed in a very positive direction. As the preamble says, "the public mood is for change". What has been put on offer should be a powerful agenda for radical change.

On the threat that privatisation will make rail transport worse rather than better, the document is refreshingly clear. It has "fragmented the network and threatened services". The Government is committed to take firm action. The silver lining to rail privatisation is that it already provides a powerful negative lesson. Public opinion is also likely to favour the more radical end of the spectrum of options for tackling the privatised chaos of buses outside London.

Mr Prescott was right, in principle and tactics, to stress that his transport policy should not be seen as "anti-car". Cars are often convenient — sometimes even fun. But an integrated transport strategy does not have to transform car use totally in order to be effective. To reduce road use by a modest 5 or 10 per cent will already be a huge improvement. A successful policy will still require determined measures designed to change the existing car culture, even if these upset small but influential lobbies. The balance between public transport and rush-hour road commuting will not change significantly until all company car perks are abolished. Firms that continue to provide or to subsidise parking space for their employees should have to pay a substantial recurring tax. The money raised in this way could be dedicated to a comprehensive system of bus lanes — and more buses. Companies should be given tax incentives to offer public transport vouchers to their employees. Shifting freight back on to the railways is a more complex business, but here, too, fairly modest efforts (compared with the cost of motorway road-building) to complete or restore missing rail links could show a significant return.

In the end, however, a new policy will require cash and infrastructure as well as political will. For the Government, the test will come next spring: till then, it is for the public to speak up against the drift to gridlock and general suffocation.

Old disease, new menace

IT IS one of the oldest of diseases. Hippocrates identified its different forms: both a chronic and acute infection with periodic paroxysms of chills and fever. Twenty-five centuries on, malaria remains one of the world's biggest killers. One-third of the planet is at risk. More than 300 million cases are reported every year. Up to 3 million die every year. Nine out of 10 deaths are in Africa, a majority of the victims are children. Yet just a few decades ago, it looked as though science had finally won. One hundred years ago this month, Italian scientists established it was mosquitoes that were spreading malaria as they fed on human blood. The parasites they release multiply in the victim's liver before spilling into the bloodstream to attack red blood cells. Even before the transmission had been documented, medics had discovered the effectiveness of quinine, from the bark of the cinchona tree, in treating the disease. But once the transmission had been identified, two separate preventive avenues became available: the elimination of the insect as well as new drugs to combat the disease.

The first insecticide programmes were begun in South Africa before the second world war. A global eradication programme was launched by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1955. Three decades ago, it looked as though the insecticide war had triumphed. Malaria had been eradicated or dramatically reduced in almost 40 countries. Further protection was provided by drugs such as chloroquine, which did not kill the parasite but protected individual patients. But then, as the threat retreated, insecticide spraying became more controversial and had to compete with other health programmes, and the effectiveness of chloroquine diminished as the parasite's resistance to the drug began to develop, malaria began to spread again. In five years, there has been a sevenfold increase in Senegal and a 10-fold increase in Europe. In the next three years, WHO estimates there will be a worldwide increase of 16 per cent.

Preventive programmes remain the key. In Africa, an old technology is proving successful: mosquito nets impregnated with a new quick-acting synthetic insecticide. The net not only provides a barrier for sleepers, but the insecticide kills the mosquitoes that try to probe through. Even cheap nets, however, cost money. International help will be vital.

Nuclear weapons cast an invisible shadow

Jonathan Steele

WHEN Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin sat down last week for a friendly chat in the French southwest, nothing was meant to be elaborate. Neither the cuisine nor the conversation. Mentioning *la bombe* would have been a surprise.

Even in a more formal setting, it was hardly likely to have come up. The two prime ministers have much to say on more urgent issues such as the Maastricht criteria for a single currency, tackling joblessness, and what to do next against the defiant war criminals of Bosnia.

Nuclear weapons have almost dropped off the agenda, both internationally and in domestic politics. The Conservative manifesto in Britain this spring did not even refer to them. The French election campaign was equally silent. Yet there are major decisions for both countries to take, as was signalled by last week's revelations that the Clinton administration is busy modernising its nuclear arsenal.

The end of the cold war reduced the danger of a nuclear conflagration to its lowest point for decades. The signing of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) last year put a stop to underground explosions. Three nuclear states — Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan — unilaterally disarmed. Three others — South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil — renounced their nuclear ambitions.

But this downward push is neither automatic nor irreversible. In two regions of tension, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, some states already have nuclear weapons that they decline to declare while others aspire to possess them. A similar dynamic may develop in East Asia. The present period could therefore end either way. It might be merely a breathing space before a new nuclear surge or, as Michael Clarke argued in an authoritative set of pre-election essays on British security options, it could be "a window of opportunity which will almost certainly never occur again".

As declared nuclear powers, Britain and France have key roles to play. Although they are committed, like all signatories of the 1995 extension to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, to move towards eliminating all nuclear weapons, the medium-term goal is more modest. Malcolm Chalmers, another of Britain's independent arms-control experts, calls it "marginalisation". If the window of opportunity were to slam shut through unexpected events or a massive heightening of nuclear tension anywhere in the world, the nuclear powers have plenty of time to go into reverse. But unless they start to reduce the role of nuclear weapons soon, they will provide no incentive or pressure for lesser-armed states. They will be shutting the window themselves.

The marginalisation menu contains several options. The first course could be a "no increase" commitment. In opposition Labour took an important step in this direction by promising not to raise the number of warheads in the British arsenal. The commitment leaves unanswered whether there could be an increase in their explosive power, accuracy, and targeting possibilities. These are not trivial points. The disclosure that the United States may be designing more powerful weapons in its secret laboratories runs counter to the spirit of the CTBT. A "no increase, no modernisation" pledge could halt this.

The second item on the menu must be nuclear transparency. The Clinton administration tried to rebut the stories of its secret build-up by claiming that no new weapons were being designed. They were simply upgrading old ones. Without steps towards better verification the argument over modernisation and build-up will never end.

Britain, regrettably, is even less open than the US. Indeed, one of today's paradoxes is that Britain, France and China are subject to fewer controls than the rest of the world. The non-nuclear states are bound by the inspection rules of the non-proliferation system. The US and Russia accept some verification under their two bilateral treaties, known as Start. Britain, France, and China reveal what they do on a purely voluntary basis. Although France became a pariah two years ago when President Chirac launched his underground nuclear tests, he rectified this when he ended the programme. The French government now produces an annual statement on the size of its nuclear arsenal.

British governments have always resisted this, not only because of the general Whitehall tradition of secrecy. Britain has probably always had fewer nuclear bombs than others think. In the cold war it was thought useful to keep the "enemy" guessing. With no enemies left, this evasiveness is counter-productive.

CHINA is a major problem. Its culture of secrecy runs deep, and it seems determined to go on building up its nuclear arsenal. Nevertheless, there is a strong case for trying to set up a five-power forum in which issues of transparency, restraint and non-proliferation could be aired. If the other four powers can prove they are capping their arsenals and ending their modernisation, a climate may be established in which China joins in.

Two years ago, as Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook produced an excellent 10-point programme that supported the idea of a nuclear weapons register, and said Britain should open its nuclear production facilities to inspection. Since May 1 we have heard nothing of it.

For the first time this century Britain faces no conceivable external threat. There is no party political division over nuclear weapons. Marginalising them might not save much money, but the Treasury would have no reason to block it.

So no political courage is needed. All that is required is the imagination to move, the energy to overcome civil service inertia, and a commitment to think things through with the astonishing range of disarmament expertise Britain's non-governmental sector has to offer.

About Turn, Forward March With Europe, edited by Jane Sharp (Institute for Public Policy Research); British Nuclear Weapons Policy: The Next Steps, by Malcolm Chalmers (International Security Information Service; +44 (0)171-839-7772)

Le Monde

Bangui warily awaits Paris troop pullout

Thomas Sotinel in Bangui, Central African Republic

TWO weeks after the French government announced that it is going to pull its troops out of the Central African Republic, everything seems normal in the capital, Bangui.

An academic told television viewers that the pullout would not "change anything economically". President Ange-Félix Patassé has been content to "take note" of the decision, while an embarrassed opposition has preferred not to make any pronouncement on the issue.

However, the pullout of French troops — known as French Operational Assistance Elements (Efao) — will mark the end of an era for the Central African Republic. A small country hemmed in by five more powerful or wealthier neighbours, it has, more than other former colonies, lived in a state of symbiosis with France ever since its independence — which has often been little more than theoretical.

A senior French official who has been monitoring events closely feels that it is time "to snap out of the cycle", and that the troops' departure could come as a salutary shock.

Shock it certainly will be: according to French estimates, the presence of Efao injects 150 million francs ($25 million) into the country's economy each year, the equivalent of 2.5 per cent of its GDP. It is, in fact, the only international aid now going to the country, whose management of state-owned companies and customs has been so slipshod it has been blacklisted by the International Monetary Fund.

In recent months, French troops have, above all, come to be seen as guarantors of peace in a country that is on the brink of civil war. More than one-third of the Central African regular army mutinied on three occasions in 1996. The first two uprisings ran into opposition from Efao, whose troops helped prevent the mutineers reaching the presidential palace.

'All this will soon be ours, chaps'

But since the beginning of this year Efao's role has consisted more of stepping in between the two sides. One of the leaders of the last uprising, Anicet Saulet, now says their presence has prevented "many outrages on both sides".

That view is not shared by Patassé, who doubts that France has any friendly feelings towards him. His supporters regularly accuse Paris of having "armed the mutineers". Patassé, a long-serving minister under Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa, is obsessed by the idea of a French "conspiracy" of the type that overthrew Bokassa.

His suspiciousness irritates the French, who have criticised him for his disastrous management of the economy — government employees got their last pay packet six months ago, and the army four months ago — and for his often provocative attitude towards the mutineers.

Patassé has tried to make up for his poor relations with France by putting out diplomatic feelers to the United States and Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Democratic Republic of the Congo.

If France's military redeployment in Africa hurts the Central African Republic, its people will certainly hold Patassé responsible. They are due to vote in a general election in 1998 and elect a new president the following year.

The increasingly ethnic nature of the clash between the government and the mutineers suggests that the worst could happen, as in Congo-Brazzaville. For the time being, Bangui remains quiet thanks to the presence of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Bangui Accords (Misab). But that mission cannot operate without logistical and tactical support from Efao.

Misab's mandate has just been extended for a further three months by the United Nations Security Council, and Bangui expects it to be renewed once again, which means the intervention force will pull out in January 1998.

The Central African Republic's opposition would like an international military presence to be maintained after that so that the election campaign can be supervised and the heat taken out of the situation. General Amadou Toumani Touré, the former Malian head of state now organising the monitoring of the Bangui accords, has taken steps to that end with the UN.

If such arrangements materialise, it will be the first time the Central African Republic has faced a major election without France playing a leading role in it. In 1993, it was only after France had put pressure on President André Kolingba that he accepted defeat.

Although one person in Patassé's immediate circle believes that a French pullout is inevitable, that view is not shared by many Central African leaders. The former president, David Dacko, likes to console himself with the thought that French troops based in the Chadian capital, N'djamena, are within "two hours" of Bangui, while at the same time admitting with a sigh that "there's something sad about any change".

(August 20)

French jobs get a boost

ON AUGUST 20, the French employment minister, Martine Aubry, gained approval from the council of ministers for her bill to create 350,000 jobs in a bid to reduce youth unemployment, *writes Jean-Michel Bezat*.

The jobs, generally available only to people under 26, will be paid according the basic minimum wage of 5,240 francs ($860) a month. The government expects the first job contracts to be signed in October.

The state will provide 80 per cent of funding, with the remaining sum being paid by associations, local authorities, council housing agencies, etc. The cost to the state is expected to be $5.75 billion over three years.

In July, Aubry asked 10 leading figures to draw up a list of needs that could not be satisfied by either the private or the public sector. "The combination of massive unemployment and unsatisfied needs is unacceptable," they wrote in their report. "It will no longer do to leave it to the passage of time or to the market to satisfy people's legitimate expectations."

The new jobs are in areas such as housing, education, health, security, culture and the environment.

During the council of ministers meeting, President Jacques Chirac said: "Everyone naturally regards youth employment as a priority. One can only applaud the idea behind the bill . . . But its implementation must not result in a massive creation of permanent government jobs. France already has more state-funded jobs than any other leading industrialised country. Priority should be given to the private sector in the drive to reduce unemployment".

(August 21)

Preparing for war against motorised folly

Jean-Paul Besset

IS THE battle against air pollution in large cities already lost? If Strasbourg is anything to go by, it would seem so. It was the first French city to take energetic steps to reduce traffic pollution by banning cars from the city centre, building a tram network and encouraging cyclists. And yet, like Lyon and Paris, which have always given priority to car drivers, it is now one of France's most ozone-polluted cities.

Is this an inevitable result of the summer heat wave? There is no denying that without fierce sunshine the nitrogen dioxide emitted by motor vehicles cannot turn into tropospheric ozone (which is harmful to the health, unlike the stratospheric ozone layer that protects us from the sun's ultraviolet rays). But the sun can also shine hard even when there is no heatwave.

The last big pollution alert in France was in January, in other words in midwinter. Climatic conditions only reveal an existing and earlier source of pollution. On August 13, pollution had not disappeared from Paris. It had simply been blown by the wind on to the forests of Fontainebleau and Rambouillet, often described as the "lungs" of the capital.

According to Gérard Mégie of the French national scientific research centre's aeronomy department, the tropospheric ozone content in our latitude is going up by about a quarter every 10 years. That increase matches the rise in the number of cars on the road. In the Ile de France region around Paris, traffic doubled between 1970 and 1994, and is expected to go on rising by 3 per cent a year.

Thanks to sensors recently set up in most French cities, we know that ozone levels are rising. What is less well known is the effect of ozone on the health. No one dares claim that ozone is harmless. But at what level and after how much exposure it becomes dangerous to humans remains a mystery. This uncertainty is paralleled by the sharp difference of opinion between the pro- and anti-nuclear lobbies over the effect of exposure to minor doses of radiation.

Initial studies do, however, give cause for concern. Research carried out in November 1994 at the request of the Ile de France regional council showed that with an ozone level of 1 (the lowest) the number of people admitted to hospital suffering from asthma increased by 17 per cent, doctors' emergency visits rose by 60 per cent, and sick leave was 20 per cent higher than average. Other research, published in February 1996, ascribed 350 deaths a year in Paris and Lyon to atmospheric pollution.

The culprit has been established (the car), and there is mounting concern about its effect on public health. What is being done about it? Should we live with the risk or try to prevent it? The answer seems obvious, yet government after government has plumped for the status quo.

There could be no better proof of this than the preposterous debate that took place in parliament last December, when the then environment minister Corinne Lepage's clear air act was passed. Article 1 stipulated that everyone had the right "to breathe air that does not harm the health". It was an appealing if not very original idea that did not, on the face of it, seem to commit the government too much.

Yet the article stuck in the throats of leading members of the then neo-Gaullist and centre-right ruling coalition, who promptly emasculated it. Why, you may wonder, were they so venomously opposed to the article? Tipped off by the automobile, road and oil lobbies, the deputies feared that the introduction of a right to breathe clean air might become a formidable tool in the hands of anyone wishing to challenge through the courts all sources of polluting emissions, especially cars.

The private car has earned itself a dominant position in the economy, in our lifestyles and in the collective imagination. It has become one of society's values and an emblem of individual freedom, whose grip cannot apparently be eased.

Whatever the intentions of successive ministers, they have come up with no more than stopgap solutions. Lepage's idea of allowing half the population to drive their cars on alternate days was a mere palliative that failed to tackle the root of the problem (the same system has been in force in Athens for the past 10 years and has not got rid of smog).

The green sticker system proposed by Dominique Voynet, the current environment minister and leader of the Greens, which would allow only clean vehicles to use the road, is little better. Both are measures introduced in response to peak pollution, not steps to prevent pollution occurring in the first place.

Successive environment ministers, like most people involved in city management, know very well that the dominance of the car cannot be kept in check either by coercion or by some miraculous solution. The only answer is to give drivers an alternative means of transport likely to convince them to use their cars only for long journeys (in urban areas, half of all vehicles cover less than 4km a day).

That alternative can exist only if priority is given to public transport — metro, buses, trams and trains, which cause much less pollution — to ensure they are quick, reliable, frequent and comfortable. Experience has shown that when this is the case users opt for public transport.

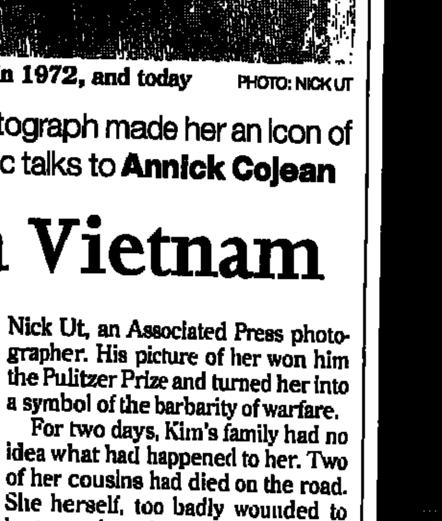
But such a policy carries a cost. The construction of dedicated transport systems using special track or lanes means cities have to be restructured. The total cost of the 74 schemes now in the pipeline in French cities is put at about $14 billion. Surely that is not too much to pay for the health of the community?

(August 15)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 31 1997



Kim, centre, after the bomb attack in 1972, and today PHOTO: NICK UT



Twenty-five years after a photograph made her an icon of Vietnam's suffering, Kim Phuc talks to **Annick Cojean**

Road from Vietnam

KIM PHUC, the napalmed little Vietnamese girl whose picture shocked the world in 1972, is alive and well and living in Toronto. Now aged 34, she is married and has a child aged three. Sitting barefoot on a sofa in her two-room flat, with the famous photograph in front of her, she seems almost serene as she recalls her traumatic experience of 25 years ago.

"It was a stifling afternoon at the height of the war," she says, speaking in a murmur. "The village had been heavily bombed by South Vietnamese planes for three days, and the population had taken refuge in the pagoda, a holy place that no soldier, not even an American one, could ever target.

"Suddenly, the situation seemed to get worse and the firing more intense. Someone spotted a coloured signal falling out of the sky towards the pagoda, designating it as a target, and shouted: 'Let's get out! We'll be dead if we stay here!' And we started running — the children first, followed by old people with food and adults with babies."

Kim ran as fast as she could. She noticed a plane flying slowly and counted four bombs coming down on her. There was hardly any noise, just a huge orange flame. "There was fire everywhere, especially in me. It was burning me. I couldn't understand why I was so hot. My skin seemed to be burning, falling off in strips like my clothes, which had been completely burnt off. I rubbed my left arm and it was sticky. It made things worse. My right hand was deformed.

"All I could see was smoke. I had to get away from the fire, so I ran as fast as I could. Luckily my feet weren't burnt. I thought I was coming out of the fire. The smoke cleared and I could make out human figures. I was no longer all alone. There was noise, screams, weeping. Everyone was running — soldiers, my younger brother Phuoc on my right, and my two cousins on my left.

"Then my elder brother saw me and panicked: 'Help my sister,' he screamed. He realised I was burning. I was yelling: 'Nong qua!' ['Too hot!'] I was in such a state of shock I almost forgot the pain. But it eventually hit me — and was unbearable. Someone poured water on my body, which was a terrible mistake. At the time no one had the slightest idea of what napalm was."

After running for a few more minutes, Kim was in such pain she passed out. But in the meantime she had appeared in the viewfinder of Nick Ut, an Associated Press photographer. His picture of her won him the Pulitzer Prize and turned her into a symbol of the barbarity of warfare.

For two days, Kim's family had no idea what had happened to her. Two of her cousins had died on the road. She herself, too badly wounded to be treated on the spot, was flown to a Saigon hospital, where she remained for 14 months.

"In the morning they would immerse me in a bath to get rid of my skin, which was always getting infected. It fell away in great pieces and had to be cut off. My body was an open wound. It hurt so much I would faint. One day my sister visited me just as I was being bathed. She couldn't bear the sight and fainted too. The nurse was furious!"

By the time Kim eventually returned to her village, where she was reunited with her parents and eight brothers and sisters, her body had been patched together by 17 transplants and various other operations.

She wanted to become a doctor and studied hard at school. Her family was poor and their house in ruins. Her mother spent all her time working in a tiny open-air restaurant. But everyone helped Kim whenever she took a bath, did her exercises or had to carry anything. Her life would have been bearable but for appalling migraines and the state of her skin, which looked like "cooked meat". As a teenager, she would stand in front of the mirror and weep: never again would she bare her back or arms to others.

'My skin seemed to be burning, falling off in strips like my clothes, which had been completely burnt off'

The war was long since over. Ut's photograph had been round the world, shocked American public opinion, caused violent controversy and, Kim likes to think, helped to hasten the end of hostilities.

In 1982, a German journalist wanted to know what had become of ut's "heroine" and asked the Vietnamese government to tell him whether she was alive or not. He got an answer 18 months later, by which time the Vietnamese authorities had realised that Kim had great propaganda potential.

She lost her freedom. She was exhibited, interviewed, exploited. She had to give up her studies, go in front of the cameras and travel the length and breadth of the country. Her hopes of becoming a doctor were dashed. She pleaded to be left alone.

She was eventually sent off to study in Cuba. For seven years, the world forgot Kim as she learnt Spanish and English and tried to come to terms with life again. She had plenty of friends and even a sweetheart, Toan, who did not dare declare his love and received little encouragement from her.

She told no one of her wish to leave Cuba. "The climate didn't suit me — I had pains and allergies, and got diabetes. But above all I felt I was being kept under surveillance. I hated the regime. It was like Vietnam."

One evening, in a hotel where students used to meet, someone said casually: "Why doesn't Kim marry Toan?" Kim was flabbergasted. A smiling Toan sat at the other end of the table, not daring to look at her. Everyone apparently got very excited about the idea and started making plans for them. No one was in any doubt about Toan's love for Kim. Three days later she said yes, and 10 days after that they married. Their friends had organised everything, even their Moscow honeymoon.

Kim pauses, crosses her legs, and laughs at the twist in the story she is about to recount. "On the plane back to Cuba, I told Toan something I'd been hiding for several weeks. I had waited too long, I had to take the plunge." Kim had decided not to go back to Cuba, but instead to leave the plane during a refuelling stop in Canada and apply for political asylum. Her decision was irreversible.

Toan was stunned. For months he had been dreaming of going back to his family in Vietnam. Kim understood, but said: "It's your choice, and I don't want to force you to do anything. But we're a family now. You'd look pretty silly going back all alone after your honeymoon." It was a cruel remark, even if it was said in jest. "In my heart of hearts, I knew he wouldn't leave me."

The plane was approaching Gander airport. Toan was slumped in his seat. They had no money, no clothes and nowhere to go. But Kim felt a sense of great urgency. It would have to be now or never. So when the plane landed and the doors opened, she rushed up to a Canadian soldier, brandishing their two passports, and, with Toan, joined the queue of people hoping to get refugee status.

"Toan was so on edge he couldn't sleep for at least a week. But we were fed and given accommodation and help. It was a delightful surprise. Toan now has two part-time jobs. He's not doing what he's qualified for, but I'm full of confidence."

Kim is a radiant person with an infectious laugh. But just occasionally, even as she is laughing, tears seem to well up in her eyes. "I hold them back. What have I to complain about? Not even when things were really bad did I ever see anger, hatred or resentment in my parents' eyes. You can't change the past, so what's the point of wallowing in it?"

Ut's photograph is not on show in Kim's little flat. It is extremely painful for her to look at it. But now that she has become a symbol she cannot forget the photograph. The napalmed Kim is now an icon of universal significance.

Last year she was invited to Washington to attend a ceremony for those who died during the Vietnam war. Speaking before an audience of several thousand Vietnam veterans, she called for hope and forgiveness. She said that if she ever met the pilot of the plane that dropped the bomb she would say: one cannot change history, but at least one can do one's best to promote peace now and in the future.

In the audience was John Plummer. It had been his responsibility to co-ordinate the bombing of Trang Bang on June 8, 1972. Now a minister of the Church after years of ups and downs, he had always carried the photograph of the little girl with him. He passed a message to Kim and then, waited, trembling. She came to see him, and they embraced.

(August 19)

Generals on the march

EDITORIAL

THE MILITARY and the champions of secularism in Turkey must be feeling satisfied: on August 16, parliament adopted an educational reform that raised the period of compulsory schooling from five to eight years.

This meant they had scored yet another point against the Islamist movement. The new law will result in the closing down of secondary sections in religious schools, which are accused of being a breeding-ground for militant "enemies of the state".

The secularists' intentions are praiseworthy: tens of thousands of children who are shining shoes and selling tea or newspapers will from now on spend more time in the classroom than on the streets. But the reform will be difficult to implement.

State schools, already overcrowded, will have to accommodate 800,000 extra pupils a year. To finance the reform, the government will impose fresh taxes, which are bound to prove unpopular with a population already hard hit by dwindling purchasing power and annual inflation of about 80 per cent.

After the generals had got what they wanted in June — the resignation of the Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, and the coming to power of a conservative coalition led by Mesut Yilmaz — they pledged not to get involved in politics again. Supporters of democracy in Turkey had every reason to be delighted.

But the generals may not stop at that. Proceedings are under way to outlaw the Islamist Welfare party. Islamist-run companies, many of them thriving, are subjected to a form of boycott: preference is given to firms that cannot be suspected of playing "a double game".

Whatever certain hawks in Ankara may say, the now weakened Islamists have no intention of placing themselves outside the law. Erbakan has asked for the educational reform to be examined by the Constitutional Court and called for a referendum on the issue.

The paradox is that during his 10 months in office Erbakan did not open a single religious school. Most such establishments (they number more than 600) were opened after the 1980 military coup in the hope of countering the influence of the far left.

Welfare, which got 21 per cent of the vote at the December 1995 general election, is now perceived as a "victim" — not necessarily a bad thing for it. But many Turks, particularly in rural areas, are questioning the role of the army, which is always scouting around for an enemy. In the seventies it was communism, in the eighties Kurdish separatism, and today the Islamist peril.

(August 19)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani
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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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The Washington Post

Latin Summit Spotlights Rivalries

Anthony Faiola in Buenos Aires

BRAZIL wants a seat on the U.N. Security Council. Argentina wants special defensive ally status from the United States. Chile is shopping for F-16 fighter jets. Peru already has bought Russian MiGs. And throughout the region, each country is growing suspicious of others' motives.

For a continent at peace, witnessing an unprecedented level of economic cooperation, South America has become increasingly focused on thorny issues of defense and security. The measures have reignited some long-standing regional rivalries and created mounting political friction that is the hottest issue at a summit of Latin American heads of government that took place last weekend in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Experts say recent developments indicate a new phase in the South American renaissance of the 1990s. Already, economic reforms and the creation of the Mercosur alliance — a sort of European Union of countries in South America's Southern Cone — have dramatically increased the continent's economic clout.

A string of state visits by French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and others have underscored the quest to woo the continent's up-and-coming free-market economies. Now, South American nations, especially the two largest — Brazil and Argentina — are trying to convert their new-found clout into a larger voice in world politics.

"Our economy has become normalized, and we've grown in [economic] strength," Sebastiao Barros, Brazil's deputy foreign minister, said in a telephone interview from Brasilia. "It's only just that we should have more recognition and be allowed to contribute more to the international community."

But in seeking more global prominence, they are stepping on each other's toes — and the United States has found itself right in the middle.

Chilean officials, for instance, have voiced strong opposition to the designation of Argentina as a "non-NATO ally" of the United States. The designation — reserved for America's closest allies outside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, such as Israel, Japan and South Korea — is expected to be bestowed when President Clinton visits Buenos Aires in October.

The prospect of Argentina's anointment as the United States' strongest strategic partner in Latin America has Chileans suspicious and its officials crying foul. U.S. State Department officials declined to comment.

"It was a remarkable error in international policy for the United States and Argentina to move toward non-NATO ally status," said Rosendo Fraga, a military analyst in Buenos Aires. "Such a designation generally exists in regions where the U.S. has enemies. But it has no enemies here, and the rest of South America is angry that Argentina is being singled out."

But the most dramatic example of mounting political tensions erupted last week. Argentine President Carlos Menem voiced opposition to Brazil's bid to become the region's first nation to hold a permanent seat on the powerful U.N. Security Council, should permanent membership be expanded beyond the current five nations. Menem argued that the seat should rotate among Latin American nations instead.

Even as Menem and Brazil's foreign minister sought to cool the controversy before their arrival in Asuncion for the summit, Menem's statements about Brazil's membership on the Security Council provoked a bitter war of words between the two neighbors that made front-page headlines.

At the same time that tensions are mounting, South American nations are seeking to modernize their militaries. Experts, however, say there is no indication of real aggression or a new Latin American arms race. The one possible exception, experts say, is the continuing tension between Peru and Ecuador, which went to war briefly in 1995 over a border dispute.

Ecuador shot down more planes than its larger neighbor during the conflict, and now Peru is working toward modernizing its aircraft. At a ceremony last month in Lima to mark the 176th anniversary of Peru's independence, President Alberto Fujimori unveiled three Russian-made MiGs, some of the most modern fighter aircraft in Latin America.

But generally, South American militaries — which, after dominating the continent for decades, took a back seat during the democratization of the 1990s — appear less intent on re-establishing primacy than simply convincing their civilian leaders of the need to modernize their ageing arsenals.



Bishops from around the world stand on a podium at Paris's Longchamp racecourse PHOTO: ARTURO MARI

Papal Mass Attracts Million Worshippers

Charles Trueheart in Paris

POPE JOHN PAUL II celebrated Mass last Sunday morning before a crowd of more than 1 million mostly young Roman Catholics, according to police estimates — nearly twice as many as had been forecast for the climax of this papal visit to Paris for the 12th World Youth Days.

Three-quarters of a million pilgrims who flocked here for the Catholic youth festival spent the night on the 136-acre infield of the Longchamp racetrack and in the nearby woods of the Bois de Boulogne after the pope led a candlelight vigil last Saturday.

When he returned to Longchamp the following day, exuberantly acclaimed once again as he traversed the crowd in his glassed-in Popemobile, John Paul had drawn several hundred thousand more for the open-air Mass.

Police said as many as 200,000 people watched the event on big screens outside the racetrack, and countless more followed the ceremonies on live television in France and around the world.

Echoing a theme of his messages during four days in France, John Paul, who returned to Rome after the ceremonies, called on the young to "go forth now along the roads of the world, along the pathways of humanity, while remaining united in Christ's church."

Sheltered from the punishing sun by white umbrellas, the pontiff addressed the massive congregation in 12 of their languages, directing a special message to the dispossessed of war-ravaged central Africa: "Dear friends, we know what hardships your peoples have experienced. With your friends in Paris, I say to you, remain courageous and remain the creators of reconciliation and harmony."

The pope, who is 77 and underwent cancer surgery last year, showed both feebleness and stamina as he completed his 79th foreign trip as head of world Roman Catholicism.

Standing at his side and during much of his visit to Paris was the city's Roman Catholic archbishop, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, who has been mentioned as a possible successor.

The pope's four days in France were not without controversy in a country that nominally at least is largely Catholic but has strong secular traditions. The French government was criticized for the expense of managing the extraordinary numbers of people who flooded into Paris and the security necessary to protect the pope, who was wounded in an assassination attempt in Rome in 1981.

The timing of the Mass was also a cause of controversy; Catholics killed thousands of Protestants in Paris and elsewhere in France in violence that began 425 years ago last Sunday in what became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. But the previous night, John Paul expressed regret for the killings, saying: "Christians did things which the Gospel condemns."

John Paul was also taken to task — by the Socialist Party now governing France, among others — for a private visit he paid to the grave of his friend Jerome Lejeune, perhaps France's most outspoken foe of abortion until his death in 1994. The pope's strict opposition to abortion and contraception is at odds with the views of most French people, including much of the Catholic population, and with French law, which has permitted abortion for 22 years.

"France is a free country, where everyone can say what they want," Lustiger said. "I would find it a little indecent not to allow the pope to demonstrate loyalty to a friend. You have to excuse this French mania for rows."

U.S. to Back Sanctions Against Angolan Rebels

Thomas W. Lippman

IN A long-shot effort to salvage the shaky peace in Angola, the Clinton administration will support new United Nations sanctions on longtime rebel leader Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA movement and is prepared to sell military transport planes to the Angolan government, according to senior officials.

The sanctions, which U.S. officials expect to be imposed by the U.N. Security Council this week, and the aircraft sale reflect the administration's exasperation with Savimbi, a former Cold War ally whom Washington holds largely responsible for the growing tension in Angola.

Washington's view was hardened this month after U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan issued a blistering report accusing Savimbi and UNITA of "totally unacceptable" practices — including failure to demobilize troops — that threaten to restart Africa's longest civil war.

During the Cold War Savimbi was Washington's proxy in a struggle against the government of Jose Eduardo dos Santos, which was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

But Savimbi has long since outlived his usefulness to Washington, and U.S. anger at his tactics has been apparent since October, when he refused to travel to Luanda, the Angolan capital, to meet then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Administration officials portrayed the forthcoming U.N. sanctions against UNITA and the planned sale of six C-130 cargo planes to the dos Santos government as intended to persuade Savimbi that he must comply with his commitments under the 1994 peace agreement known as the Lusaka Protocol.

But both moves have come under bipartisan fire from key members of Congress, who said they would unfairly punish UNITA while failing to recognize violations of the Lusaka agreement by the dos Santos government, and would undermine U.S. credibility as a neutral mediator.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, R-North Carolina, and African Affairs subcommittee Chairman John D. Ashcroft, R-Missouri, wrote Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright that "It would be extremely unwise for the United States to abandon its policy of neutrality in Angola and become militarily involved on the side of the [dos Santos] government."

They said it is dos Santos and his MPLA party who are preparing to resume the war, hoping to take advantage of the downfall of Savimbi's longtime patron, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, to gain the final military victory that has eluded them for 20 years.

But senior administration officials said most of the blame for the tension clearly lies with Savimbi and that the development of bilateral relations — including military relations — with the Luanda government "cannot be held hostage," as one put it, to Savimbi's delaying tactics.

The State Department dispatched a team headed by special envoy Paul Hare to Angola this month to appeal to both sides to carry out their commitments under the Lusaka agreement.

Hare was to tell Savimbi that additional U.N. sanctions are imminent and "make clear to Savimbi that his future role and his political credibility are at stake in compliance," a State Department official said.

However, U.S. officials held out little hope that Savimbi will improve his compliance record because, they said, he has no compelling reason to do so. Despite the overthrow of Mobutu, U.S. officials said, Savimbi still controls large stretches of rural Angola where rich diamond mines give him an estimated $400 million a year to pay for weapons — which U.S. officials said are flowing into Angola on jet cargo planes from Zambia and Congo.

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Israelis Ponder Arafat's Position

William Drozdiak in Jerusalem

WHEN Yasser Arafat kissed and embraced the leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad at a meeting of Palestinian factions last week, the conciliatory gestures toward radical Muslim groups suspected of perpetrating terrorist acts outraged much of Israel and the Western world.

Was Arafat condoning violence against Israel and preparing for the kind of armed confrontation that has spilled so much blood in the Middle East between two peoples fighting over the same land? Or was he engaged in a clever ploy to co-opt the enemies of peace and thus strengthen his hand for future negotiations with the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

Nearly four years after he signed the Oslo peace accords, Arafat finds himself trapped by conflicting pressures that threaten to undermine his self-governing authority, destroy his fragile partnership with Israel and shatter his dream of establishing a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The self-styled father of the Palestinian revolution is renowned for his survival skills in times of political peril. But this time, his fate seems intertwined more than ever with an Israeli government that profoundly distrusts him yet loathes even more the extremist alternatives to his leadership.

An impassioned debate has gripped Israel over whether the country's interests are best served by weakening or strengthening Arafat. A month after the Israeli government imposed tough sanctions and security measures in the wake of a suicide bombing that killed 14 people and two terrorists in a Jerusalem market, Israelis are starting to question whether those measures may inflict more harm than good on their country.

As so often happens when he finds himself in a jam, Arafat has resorted to ambiguity to mask his intentions until the dust settles. On the first day of the Palestinian unity conclave in Gaza, he waved the sword and the olive branch with equal gusto. "There was an uprising for seven years. Who did it? Our lion cubs, our children. This glorious uprising. Seven years. We can . . . do it again from the beginning. All options are open to us."

But he also offered a vigorous defense of the peace process. "We must not forget that most of the Israeli people voted for peace," Arafat said. "I say to the supporters of peace in Israel: We are with you to make this peace of the brave, a just and comprehensive peace, not the peace of the weak or the cowards."

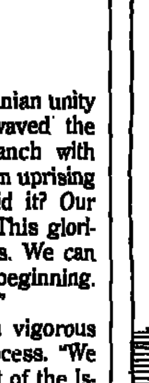
Just before the bombers struck, Arafat was confronting a barrage of criticism about alleged corruption in his ruling entourage. Many Palestinians, having seen their incomes plunge 40 percent since the Oslo accords were signed, were also voicing bitter complaints about the absence of a peace dividend.

Netanyahu's decision after the bombing to block access to jobs for 100,000 Palestinian workers and to suspend the transfer of at least $40 million in tax revenues to Arafat's Palestinian Authority has only escalated the frustrations of many Palestinians and further damaged their faith in the peace process.

In this political climate, Arafat's top aides say he had no choice but to reject Israeli and American demands that he round up more than 200 suspected Islamic activists and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure. They argue that if he caves in to such conditions, his political legitimacy would be greatly eroded and the popularity of Hamas and other implacable foes of the peace process would continue to surge.

"Every time the peace process stumbles it translates into gains for Hamas," said Ziad Abu Amr, a leading member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. "Arafat . . . feels genuinely threatened by Netanyahu and his schemes. He needs a lot of support, and not more pressure."

Israeli cabinet hard-liners scoff at claims that Arafat's behavior helps peace prospects by blunting



Hamas's influence. "Arafat is two-faced," said cabinet secretary Danny Naveh. "On the one hand he says he is against terrorism and afterward he runs to hug the killers of women and children."

But some cabinet members and much of the opposition Labor party argue that Israel needs to ponder what may lie in store if it persists in mortifying Arafat. With Hamas's support growing steadily — Israeli and Palestinian analysts estimate the Islamic resistance movement is now backed by 40 to 50 percent of Gaza and West Bank residents — they suggest that Israel must consider the long-term consequences of rubbing Arafat's nose in the dirt.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordecai urges greater understanding of Arafat's predicament. "Given the difficulties facing him, Arafat is trying within the Palestinian camp to find as wide a common denominator as possible. But in the end he also knows that Hamas is the main threat to the Palestinian Authority," he said.

Uri Savir, chief of staff to former Labor prime minister Shimon Peres and a key architect of the Oslo accords, also warns that U.S. and Israeli pressure on Arafat could backfire. "What is the alternative? Do we want to deal with Hamas?" he asked.

For his part, Netanyahu is standing firm in his demand that Arafat must show his determination to salvage the peace process by arresting terror suspects, confiscating weapons and uprooting underground cells as he did last year after 57 Israelis died in a series of bomb attacks.

"We say to the Palestinians that they must make a very simple choice — it is either to embrace Hamas or to embrace peace. But you can't do both," Netanyahu said last week, even though his own government released Abdel Aziz Rantissi, the Hamas political leader whom Arafat publicly kissed, from an Israeli jail earlier this year.

The Israeli prime minister emphasized that Arafat's actions on security cooperation remain the key to progress in reaching a comprehensive peace settlement. "No one should expect us to go with the peace process while turning a blind eye and saying that despite the Palestinian Authority's not fighting terrorism, the process must go forward," he said.

Some Israelis say Arafat may be cooperating in private more than his public rhetoric would suggest. This month he met with Ami Ayalon, the head of Israel's General Security Service, to discuss his dilemma about Hamas. Palestinian intelligence agents have turned over to their Israeli counterparts samples of explosives found in a Hamas bomb factory. And Arafat's police forces have quietly arrested a dozen key members of Islamic radical groups.

FAA Failures Led to ValuJet Crash

Don Phillips

VALUJET Flight 592 probably would not have crashed into the Florida Everglades on May 11, 1996 if the Federal Aviation Administration had followed a decade-old recommendation to require fire detection and suppression systems in aircraft cargo holds, the National Transportation Safety Board said last week.

The board, voting on its final report of the crash that killed 110 people, also listed as "probable causes" the failure of the maintenance contractor SabreTech to properly "prepare, package, identify and track" hazardous oxygen generators that were improperly placed in the cargo hold, and ValuJet's failure to oversee SabreTech.

"Contributing" to the cause, the board said, were the FAA's failure to adequately monitor ValuJet's maintenance program and its maintenance contractors, the FAA's failure to adequately respond to prior oxygen generator fires, and ValuJet's failure to train its employees about hazardous material handling.

"The ValuJet accident happened from failures up and down the line," said Chairman Jim Hall as the board neared conclusion of a daylong recitation of the numerous problems and oversights that led to the crash.

Flight 592, which had just left Miami for Atlanta, was struck with a violent on-board fire minutes after takeoff. The crew's attempt to return to Miami failed with the burning aircraft slamming into the Everglades swamp just 10 minutes after takeoff. Shortly before takeoff, five boxes of oxygen generators, without safety caps and incorrectly marked "empty," were loaded aboard, along with several aircraft tires.

The board said its investigation indicated one or more of the generators — which are used in some aircraft to chemically produce oxygen for passenger oxygen masks — "were actuated at some point after the loading process began, but possibly as late as during the plane's takeoff roll."

The ultimate cause of the crash was "most likely" the failure of flight controls in the extreme heat and structural collapse, although the board report said it could not rule out the possibility that the crew was incapacitated by smoke or heat during the last seven seconds of flight.

The generators, normally housed in insulated compartments when installed for use, can produce heat up to 500 degrees Fahrenheit and enough oxygen to feed a fire even in the sealed "class D" cargo holds that are designed to snuff out fire by denying it oxygen from outside.

If there had been smoke detectors in the cargo hold, the board said the pilot might have received warning early enough to avoid the takeoff, and in any case would have had more time to land. With the added protection of fire suppression, even if the system had been overcome, "it would likely have provided time to land the airplane safely."

The board said if the FAA had responded adequately to fire safety recommendations made as early as 1988, "ValuJet Flight 592 would likely not have crashed."

The FAA said in a statement that as a result of the crash it had taken "a hard look at itself" and had already made major safety improvements. This includes a proposed rule to require fire detection and suppression systems, as well as more inspectors and new procedures on dangerous cargo.

The board nearly did not include ValuJet in the highest level of probable cause. The board said that it was "not unreasonable" for ValuJet ramp agents and the flight crew to accept the mislabeled cargo or to fail to secure it properly. However, ValuJet was moved up from a "contributing" designation to a "probable cause" following an appeal from board member John Goglia, who said that ultimately the airline is responsible for its own safety, including oversight of its contractors, and "that is absolute."

ValuJet blasted the change as a "distorted interpretation of the Federal Aviation Regulations."

No Clear Winners in Strike Deal

EDITORIAL

THE brown UPS vans resumed rolling last week, marking the end of the biggest strike the country has seen in years. No one — not the employer, not the workers, not the customers — ever comes out of a strike unscathed, and this 15-day, 185,000-worker stoppage was no exception. But it ended on a more positive note than it might have. President Clinton and Labor Secretary Alexis Herman properly refrained from ordering the Teamsters union back to work while nudging both parties to the negotiating table. UPS, which dominates the package-shipping industry, emerged with a five-year contract that offers stability and a chance to regain lost business. The Teamsters won most of their demands, helping to reenergize the labor movement.

Whether the agreement represents the beginning of a "new era," as Teamsters President Ron Carey proclaimed, is something else again. Carey defined the strike as a struggle against a trend toward part-time labor. But while it is true that most new UPS jobs in recent years have been part-time, the company is hardly typical. For one thing, unlike many firms, UPS offers some benefits to its part-time workers. More important, in the U.S. economy at large there is no trend toward part-time work. During the past two decades, part-time workers have accounted for a consistent 17 or 18 percent of the work force. More than three-quarters of them say they don't want full-time work.

Yet much of the public supported the UPS strikers, a turnabout from past recent strikes, because Carey's rhetoric about part-time work, no matter how off-base, resonated with a lot of people. Part-time work became symbolic of a whole constellation of issues — temporary work, contingent hiring, downsizing, outsourcing — which add up to a feeling of insecurity for many workers. There's no question that the current economic upturn has benefited those in the upper income levels far more than low-wage, less-educated workers.

The Teamsters are wrong to suggest that part-time work is always an evil. If firms are forced to take on only full-time workers they will create fewer jobs. Look at Western Europe, where such mandates have helped push unemployment rates to 12 percent or higher, as against 5 percent in this country. But unions are right to fight for proportionate benefits and wages for part-time workers, not only as a matter of fairness but also to discourage companies from categorizing employees as part-time to avoid paying them reasonable benefits.

The UPS strike showed that today's unions can be relevant to today's workers. But the problem in a globalizing economy of accommodating both competitiveness and flexibility on one side and job security and a decent wage on the other is anything but solved.

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Welcome to Che World

Tourists are flocking to the Bolivian countryside where the rebel leader was killed. **Anthony Faiola** reports from Vallegrande

SEE THE very place where legendary guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara lived and died! Trudge through the mud-covered hillside he himself once climbed! Talk to the peasants who fed and clothed him and his hapless band of communists! And don't miss the mass grave where his bones, minus the hands that were chopped off 30 years ago and sent back to Fidel Castro, were just rediscovered!

Here in the wilds of central Bolivia, Che the Industry is flourishing. With the recent excavation of Guevara's long-lost remains, the trail where the charismatic communist icon spent his final days is on its way to becoming, well, Che World.

Scores of pilgrims from Berlin and Berkeley, Adams Morgan and the Andes arrive here each week to walk in the tracks of Guevara's combat boots. Locals here peddle soft drinks and snacks to tourists at double normal prices; and if you need a Che backpack, pin or snapshot, have they got a deal for you. The *piece de resistance*: Plans are underway to stage a concert for an estimated 5,000 Che groupies on October 9 to mark the 30th anniversary of his execution.

How far has the mania gone? Just listen to the buzz: "Che is a god now," said Michel Livet, chief organizer of a group of Bolivian companies now selling the Che Route to tour operators worldwide. "Let's face it, he even looks a little bit like Jesus Christ."

The marketing of Guevara's trail comes at an extraordinary time in the evolution of his legacy. Indeed, Cuba may be pushing pina coladas to capitalist tourists and Russia's new rich may be mobsters in jogging suits, but the ideal of global communism lives on in the image of Che that is clung to here.

A physician and scion of a prominent Argentine family, Guevara rewrote Latin American history by becoming a radical revolutionary and a catalyst in the overthrow of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista's government in 1959. A thorn in Washington's side for much of the 1960s, Che attempted single-handedly to launch the much feared communist Domino Effect in South America. His mission in Bolivia, however, lasted less than a year before he and his men were captured and executed by the army in 1967, with a little help from its friends at the CIA.

In the 1990s, Guevara has become a pop icon, a sort of political James Dean. Even as communism has faded, legions of fans across the world have romanticized Che's ideal of stealing from the rich to give to the poor. The young love him for the rebellion he conjures. The middle-aged love him for the nostalgia he brings of the radical lives they lived before the minivan, the job at Microsoft and the 2.2 kids.

"Che is memories for me . . . We waved Guevara's banner in the university square [as students], and he meant equality and justice," said Paul Rouweler, 46, a teacher at a high school near Amsterdam, as he looked down at the red earthen pit where Guevara's bones were excavated near an airstrip in Vallegrande.



Che Guevara . . . a political James Dean PHOTOGRAPH: LEE LOCKWOOD

"And he was very sexy, too," added Helga Mayer, 50, a pilgrim from Ludwigshafen, Germany.

Indeed, the signs of Che Chic are everywhere — and decidedly capitalist. Several movies are in the works, including a big-budget project by Warner Brothers. The hot rock group Rage Against the Machine used Che on the cover of its latest CD. For the armchair terrorist, Che Swatch watches are now available. Three major Che biographies were published in the past year, and two more are planned for next year.

ON THE streets of Buenos Aires in his native Argentina, Che photo albums — many containing borderline beefcake shots of the bearded guerrilla — cover souvenir stands. Che T-shirts are for sale from London to San Francisco. And the high-tech Che fan can check out hundreds of Che-related sites on the Internet.

His left-wing comrades have rationalized the marketing frenzy into something positive. "Personalities like Che can't be merchandised without . . . some of this ideology penetrating through to the 'consumers,'" said Loyola Guzman, a founding member of the Che Guevara Foundation in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz, who was a member of his guerrilla band in the 1960s. The result, she said, will be a new generation of people "who question authority" because of Che.

With all this capitalism whirling around the dead communist, Bolivians understandably smell gold. But they lost a big nugget last month when Che's newly discovered bones were shipped to Cuba after scientists identified them genetically. The Castro government is doing its part for Che tourism, building a mausoleum in Santa Clara, Cuba, where the bones will rest.

That left the Bolivians down, but not out. The sexiest stuff — including the death site — is still here, on the trail where Che, disguised at first as a Uruguayan businessman, came in November 1966 with a tiny band of men and a plan to turn this forgotten patch of earth into an international training ground for communist guerrillas. The severely asthmatic Guevara combed these mountains, often by donkey because walking made breathing difficult. His diary, later sold to a publishing house by a Bolivian army officer, suggests that even toward the end, after he had lost several men to desertion and army bullets and was wracked by depression, he never quite realized how desperate his situation had become.

"There is no sense Che ever thought the fight was truly over during his time in Bolivia," said Klaus Shutt, a Bolivian who, with the Cuban government, filmed a documentary on Che. "Yes, a few of his men had died, but that was to be expected on a project as big and vast as he envisioned — which was to turn South America totally communist."

It is a longing to reclaim Che's memory that brought, on a recent Saturday night, 31 European, Bolivian and U.S. tourists to the sidewalk outside the offices of a tour company in Sucre, the judicial capital of Bolivia. Along with Santa Cruz, Sucre is one of two launching points into Che Country. The gathered Che groupies, even the university professors, were dressed in classic crunchy granola. Olive drab was the primary color, and at least three of the men were wearing berets, as Che did.

As they prepared to embark on the bus for the seven-hour night journey to the historic route, they began swapping Che stories. But not the ideological kind.

"Where did you get that pin?" a Dutchman asked a German teenager donning a fashionable Guevara badge. "They were selling them in the cafe," the German replied. "Where were you?"

The journey here traverses a rugged landscape of winding mountain roads, arid lowlands and raging streams where Guevara hiked with his men, attempting to coax the locals into providing food and drink.

One of the two main stops on the trail is La Higuera, where Che was killed after a brutal interrogation. He had already been wounded when he was captured about two miles from La Higuera and made to walk to the village despite his lame leg. La Higuera had 70 inhabitants in its heyday; today, only about 20 people live there, tending a few livestock and a general store that stocked up on soft drinks, bottled water, candy and Che postcards once the tourists started coming.

For about $4, the son of the village's unofficial mayor will give you a brief tour. The schoolhouse where Che was killed was torn down long ago, and a medical clinic now stands there, emblazoned with his unmistakable image. There are two other monuments to Che: a stone obelisk and bust in the village square; and a shrine with a cross, opposite the square, to which villagers bring candles and prayers.

IN FACT, Che is known in La Higuera as San Ernesto. When dry spells come, the locals carry pictures of Che, offering dances and prayers so the saint with the hairy face will send down rain.

"It works without fail," said Irma Rosado, 60, who recalled seeing Che twice: once alive, drinking water from a nearby fountain, and later as a corpse on the table of the local school.

The village's primary tourist attraction, however, is Virginia Casrita, a 46-year-old midget who appears in Che's diary because her family once provided him with drinking water. She sat in her Indian garb in the local park recently as rapt tourists listened to her accounts of Che. Experts doubt that Casrita ever actually met Guevara, but she tells a good story, and the tourists got what they came to hear.

Bolivian army officers flew Che's body from La Higuera to the larger town of Vallegrande, about 300 miles southeast of La Paz, the capital. His body was displayed in the washroom of a hospital here in October 1967, and most of the town turned out to catch a glimpse of the army's trophy terrorist. Today, the room where his body was displayed has been turned into a sanctum, with poems on the walls and candles and incense burning constantly.

The soldiers cut off Che's hands for later confirmation of his identity through fingerprints, then buried him in an unmarked grave near Vallegrande's tiny airport. It was here that his bones, and those of many of his men, were dug up last month after two years of searching, upon the insistence of Guevara's relatives and the Cuban government.

One recent day, after a week of severely dry weather, the pit in which Che's bones were found was muddy from rains that had begun only hours before. The tourists recalled that villagers in La Higuera had made offerings to San Ernesto for rain the day before.

"Ernesto is forgiving," Casrita had said then. "He was killed here, yes. But he sees the ground needs water, and he gives. He sees the people need, and he gives . . . He is the only one we have to help us."

And as Casrita collected a much needed $10 donation from rapt tourists, it became obvious that here in Bolivia, San Ernesto is most certainly still giving.

Putting the Cork Back On Alcopops

Amitai Etzioni

MARKETING industry insiders call them "training wheels," products sold to teenagers and children to entice them and, ultimately, to get them hooked. Apple computers, donated to schools, are considered training wheels. Less benign are intoxicating new products called "alcopops," the liquor industry's equivalent of Joe Camel.

Alcopops are lemonades, colas and fruit-flavored frozen malts that typically contain 4 percent to 6 percent alcohol, often more than beer. Sold in colorful packages, squeeze pouches and soda bottles, they bear such catchy names as "Freeze und Squeeze," "Yellow Belly" and "Two Dogs Lemon Brew." Designed to appeal to teenagers, alcopops have been placed in bins that contain ice cream bars and fruit drinks, rather than in the coolers that hold beer and wine.

Still, you are not likely to find many kids popping these alcohol-laced juices any time soon. The story of how the lid was kept on alcopops may help prevent teenage (and adult) alcoholism from rising even faster, but because it provides a fine primer in civic action.

Alcopops were test-marketed in five U.S. cities this summer by McKenzie River Corp., maker of St. Ides malt liquors. Pouches of the product were shipped to New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago — reaching about 50 shops per city, most of them reported to be in minority neighborhoods.

When alcopops first appeared, they were met with a wave of protest, especially in New York City. The press ran unfavorable reports; borough presidents protested the marketing ploy in no uncertain terms, stating it was directly aimed at children and minorities; civic and church groups joined in; the city's commissioner of consumer affairs expressed dismay.

City inspectors cited a delicatessen in Harlem, in New York City, for selling the drinks to minors. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who occasionally stands up to business, threatened to shut down the offending stores unless they ceased sales. From Washington, the critical voice of the Alcohol Policies Project at the Center for Science in the Public Interest was heard. In California, where similar products popped up, priced at less than a buck, two Los Angeles assemblymen threatened action.

Within days, McKenzie River Corp. announced that it would withdraw the offending pops from the shelves.

It's too early to celebrate. The alcohol industry's profits are stagnant. It has been looking for ways to entice new customers. In Canada, where the sales of alcoholic lemonade preceded those in the United States, alcopops are "the most successful launch of a new beverage product in a decade," according to William Sh[illegible]e, CEO of Lakeport Brewing Corp.

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Members of the Mutual Support Group demonstrate on behalf of Guatemala's disappeared PHOTO: JOE FISH

Witnesses for the Persecuted

Colman McCarthy

UNARMED BODYGUARDS
International Accompaniment For the Protection of Human Rights
By Liam Mahony and Luis Enrique Eguren Kumarian. 288pp. $46; paperback, $21.95.

WHEN foreign-policy sophisticates dismiss nonviolent resistance as naive dreaminess, they usually try to justify their skepticism with the predictable put-down: Nonviolence is fine as a theory, but in the real world where has it saved lives?

Few worlds were as real as Guatemala in the mid-1980s, when the military dictators — bankrolled by Congress and cheered on by Reaganites — were imposing their vile will by means of more than 100,000 assassinations and 40,000 abductions. In this land of carnage and disappearances a small band of volunteer peace workers arrived in 1983. They belonged to Peace Brigades International (PBI), founded two years earlier at a Canadian conference on nonviolence.

In the field of human rights, they were newcomers. Unlike such established groups as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which specialize in monitoring and publicizing repression, PBI offers a personal service to local people under threat: accompaniment. Outsiders — the "unarmed bodyguards" in the title of this morally inspiring work — literally place themselves in harm's way with the goal of preventing the harm.

The authors are neither theorists nor report-writers analyzing the scene from a safely distant perch. They served as accompaniers, making their descents into evil as an expression of their commitment to the Gandhian ideal that nonviolence is a way of life, not a mere strategy for a particular conflict.

Liam Mahony, a freelance writer from Cape Cod, traveled to Guatemala City in early 1987. Immediately, he became a protective escort for members of the Guatemalan Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared (GAM). For the first two months he lived in a one-room house in Guatemala City with some orphans, the children of parents whose mutilated corpses were found in a ditch off the Pan American highway near their home village of Chimaltenango.

Mahony writes: "At night I slept on a small flea-ridden cot in the same room as the children. Mariano [the oldest brother] made himself scarce, since the police kept stopping by, looking for him 'for questioning.' The children, terrified, would ask me to answer the door ... Eventually the police stopped coming. The children relaxed a little. Mariano moved the whole family back up to Chimaltenango, explaining that things were calm now and they would no longer need accompaniment. I never learned why such a hell had been visited upon this family."

Mahony's co-author, Luis Enrique Eguren, a physician now working in the Canary Islands, began his accompaniment service in 1988 in El Salvador In time, PBI expanded beyond Guatemala and El Salvador. It sent volunteers to Sri Lanka, Colombia and Haiti. Its volunteers were mostly from the peace churches — Quaker, Mennonite, Brethren — and most had committed themselves to nonviolence.

The authors, who did protective accompaniment work for four years, began their research in 1992. As both reporters and subjectively involved activists, they turned out to be careful analysts who did not let their fervor for social justice lead them into one-sided conclusions.

"There are good reasons," Mahony and Eguren write, "to trust the veracity and analysis of the victim over that of the attacker. But this bias must be tempered by the recognition that even heroic human rights activists who risk their lives every day may be ill-informed and mistaken in their analysis ... The accompaniment volunteer, as well as the scholar, without sacrificing any moral convictions, must look beyond the good guy-bad guy dichotomy and comprehend the thinking of all the key players."

The authors did that by interviewing, among others, Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, Guatemala's ex-dictator, who was seen as a mass murderer by human rights groups and as a patriot fighting communism by his defenders. Ten years after the early 1980s, when Mejia ran what the authors call "one of the most vicious and effective state terror systems in Latin American history," the general invited Mahony and Eguren to his home for an interview.

Self-righteous, blunt and contemptuous of human rights groups that he saw as pests, the general recalled: "We were facing a very difficult situation. First of all, the subversives had slowly been working their way into all different sectors of society. They were running the unions and had control of the university. They had infiltrated the church.

"For instance, we had our daughters in a Catholic school, as did most of our friends. And the priest and nuns there began taking them out to visit poor people, to give them food or make them clothes or other acts of charity. Slowly but surely, they were putting Communist ideas in our children's heads. We eventually had to pull our children out of these schools. The priests were a real problem ..."

THAT thinking differs little from the policies of the State Department and Pentagon in the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan proclaimed that Central America was becoming "a Soviet beachhead." In loftier language than spoken by Mejia, such Reagan underlings as Jeane Kirkpatrick, Alexander Haig, Oliver North and Elliott Abrams were preaching the message of dictators: Kill the subversives.

Did Accompaniment save lives? Amilcar Mendez, the brave Guatemalan who won the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation human rights award in 1990, states: "Without accompaniment I would not be alive today." Large numbers of Guatemalans belonging to the Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared, including Rigoberta Menchu, the Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1992, acknowledge their debt to PBI.

The power of accompaniment has proven itself. The authors confess that the movement remains small and underfunded. They make no grandiose claims that protective escorting ends wars. What they can claim — and with no dispute from anyone who values original research and comprehensive reporting — is that Unarmed Bodyguards brings to life the stories of the persecuted and those who nobly stood with them.

Comic License to Thrill

Jay A. Fernandez

THE GUN SELLER
By Hugh Laurie
Soho. 339pp. $24.

LOOK no further. That is, please continue reading this review, but you can stop the search for that perfect read for the final weeks of the summer. If you can allow yourself only one more "light" book, just one, before the encroaching darkness of fall, this has to be it. The Gun Seller is fast, topical, wry, suspenseful, hilarious, witty, surprising, ridiculous and pretty wonderful.

Our narrator, as well as reluctant crusader against money-grubbing governments and the myopic military-industrial complex, might be James Fincham, a decent man in the wrong place at the right time. Or he's Herr Balfour, high-rolling vacationer at a swank Swiss ski resort. Or is he Ricky, the young, intelligence-challenged Minnesotan terrorist? (Imagine Philip Marlowe as conceived by P.G. Wodehouse, or Fletch played by Denis Leary.)

The man behind these identities is Thomas Lang, former officer of the Scots Guard, unemployed, underfed and generally uninterested. Yet, by the end, Lang stands as a hero for the '90s: flippant, cynical, sensitive, resourceful, world-weary, strong and ethical. A man stranded in the middle of the chaotic sea of modern life with just a healthy sense of irony for a life jacket.

The plot chases down our hero on page one as his arm is being painfully broken by another man. As clear as I can make it, this is why: While in Amsterdam doing nothing in particular, Lang was approached by a man named McCluskey who offered him a lot of money to kill a man named Alexander Woolf, at which point Lang, being the upstanding guy he is, refused the job, but decided to return to London and warn the target, whereby he was attacked by the actual killer, who tries to break Lang's arm and is knocked silly by him, whereupon an enchanting woman whom Lang immediately falls in love with, and who turns out to be Woolf's daughter, appears and calls the police, who inform Lang that the man he has beaten badly is in fact Woolf's bodyguard, causing Lang to appear to be the attempted murderer, until Lang finds out that McCluskey is actually Alexander Woolf, a man who apparently hired Lang to kill the same man who hired him.

Right.

Mind you, this only gets you to page 50 or so, where the plot gets really convoluted. And if you can put the book down at this point, you shouldn't be reading anything without pictures. Laurie has constructed a delightful novel with (almost) everything: There's a genuine plot twist on every other page, good guys/girls that you care about and bad guys/girls that you want to see mauled beyond recognition, good guys that turn out to be bad guys and vice versa, chases, exotic locales, a heavy moral center, flinty dialogue, loads of suspense and, keeping up with the times, a world full of guns. In this case, the weapons that fire the plot are a new class of "small, fast, and violent" helicopters with enough firepower to take out people by the buildingful, and for which the manufacturer needs buyers. Desperately.

Double crosses and deaths pile up as Lang is sucked into the jaws of global intrigue and misplaced love. From first glance the love interest has femme fatale written all over her: Sarah is pleasant enough to call the police to arrest him on their first meeting, point a gun at him on their second, and then finally shoot him on their third. You can see why he's so smitten.

Witty sarcasm and wise-guy antics aside, Lang is a hard man, a former soldier unafraid of combat. An exceptional fighter, he employs his skills only when absolutely necessary, relying instead on talking his way through potentially violent situations. His preferred form of self-defense is confusing the hell out of his opponents.

The only thing sharper than his tongue is his power of perception. Here he meets his soon-to-be nemesis, Russell P. Barnes, an American intelligence official at the American Embassy in London: "He looked over some half-moon glasses at me as I came in, but carried on reading, running an expensive fountain pen down the margin as he went. Every fibre of his body said dead Viet Cong, well-armed Contras, and General Schwarzkopf call me Rusty."

This book is not all one-liners and jaunty verbal sparring. There is a thematic gravity throughout that arises from the ominous, dispassionate way in which the agents of evil present their designs. As one says with spooky nonchalance, "Terrorists these days are businessmen . . . and businesswomen." When the plot juggernaut of the second half of the book gets rolling — it includes the antics of a terrorist group called the Sword of Justice and the takeover of the American consulate in Casablanca.

MY TWO problems with the novel are these: One, in the second half it does indeed become extremely difficult to follow the plot. (What is lacking in coherent narrative explanation, however, is more than made up for by the clever tidiness of the finale.) Two, there's not nearly enough sex, and what there is is far too discreet. While I admire Lang's personal code of ethics (I told you he was a hero for the '90s), it wouldn't have hurt to let him sleep with a few of the women who are obviously in thrall to his quirky charms.

The Gun Seller is described as a "spoof on the spy genre" on the jacket copy. This strikes me as not quite fair. Take away the unique tone of the narrator and you've got an international thriller as solid as anything that Len Deighton or Robert Ludlum has written. Add Lang and you've got an entertaining, fresh and funny genre novel with an edge on the competition. My fervent hope is that Lang makes future appearances — it just may be that Laurie is on the verge of creating his own sub-genre, which I am proud to dub "Sarcastic Realism."

Hugh Laurie is an actor (Blackadder, Jeeves And Wooster), and if you've ever seen Blackadder, you will recognize how easily his comic sensibility was transposed into this, his first novel. "As daft as tripe," one of my British colleagues quipped about the author, and while I'm not sure what the heck that means, it was said in a complimentary way. This is right on the money in describing the book as well. The playful likability of the narrator had me laughing and the plot machinery had me rapt, so that when I say that this is perfect light summer reading, it is meant in the most complimentary way.

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World Bank set to target corruption

The IMF's move against Kenya marks a sea change in attitude towards corrupt regimes, writes **Mark Tran** in New York

CORRUPTION was a dirty word when James Wolfensohn took over as World Bank president over two years ago, and studiously avoided in discussions with government officials. Now the issue comes up practically every time in his official meetings. In the 50 countries he has visited, Mr Wolfensohn says that corruption is the biggest issue on the minds of voters and the single largest inhibiting factor to private investment.

Next week, the Bank will unveil its anti-corruption guidelines in advance of the IMF-World Bank annual meeting in Hong Kong next month. The IMF has already sent a loud message with its decision earlier this month to suspend $220 million in loans and credits to Kenya because the government failed to tackle high-level corruption and mismanagement — a first in IMF history.

The IMF's unprecedented move against Kenya marks a sea change in attitude towards corruption. During the cold war, banks and governments looked the other way as pro-Western leaders in the developing world treated national treasuries as their personal piggy-banks. Now, governments and institutions are tackling the issue head-on as part of a broader emphasis on good governance — currently considered the handmaiden to sustainable economic development.

The new readiness of institutions such as the IMF, the Bank and the United Nations to raise the subject of good governance lays them open to charges of neo-colonialism, except that developing nations realise that it is in their interest to root out corrupt practices.

In a frank admission of Africa's shortcomings, African governors at the World Bank said in a report last September that their countries must commit themselves irrevocably to addressing serious governance problems: corruption, lack of accountability and nepotism.

They called on African governments to share power with regional and local administrations, reform their civil services and allow society — from trade unions to news media — to flourish. The willingness of respected African officials to discuss governance allows international institutions to raise the subject without squeamishness.

Rooting out corruption will be an enormous challenge. In a paper for the Bank, Susan Rose-Ackerman of Yale Law School warns that a reform strategy should not eliminate programmes with a strong public justification, and without simply shifting the benefits to the private sector.

Deregulation in one area may only increase corruption elsewhere, and the privatisation process itself is open to abuse, as was made abundantly clear in Russia where bidders for franchises bribed officials in the privatisation authority.

A critical test for the Fund and Bank will come in countries such as Indonesia, where the economy is performing satisfactorily despite corruption. In cases where the government gets the job done, the pressure will be on Bank and Fund officials not to rock the boat. Picking on Kenya, where the IMF holds the cards, is much easier.

Ms Rose-Ackerman urges the Bank to make it much clearer that corruption will be not be accepted as normal in its own grants and loans. It should also be ready to cancel projects where corruption, veniality or incompetence is uncovered, and discontinue lending in countries where corruption at senior levels appears endemic. That is strong medicine, and has to be weighed against the possible benefits to the wider populace, even if it means that senior officials are taking their cut along the way.

The campaign against corruption certainly has momentum on its side. Supra-national organisations and local community groups have adopted resolutions or launched initiatives against it. But the depth of the problem cannot be minimised: when the Mexican drug tsar, General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, and two of his former aides are on trial on narcotics charges, it shows the size and seriousness of the task ahead.

The office with no workers

Charlotte Denny explores the future of the 'new economy'

RON HIXON says of his workforce: "I trust them, that's the key." Yet none of those 70 employees has turned up at the office. They will not be in the office tomorrow, either. As he looks around his 6,000sq ft of almost deserted premises in Woking, Surrey, he is untroubled.

His staff are the shock troops of the "new economy", computer technicians who work from home. With a modem and a laptop, they are connected to the rest of the company as surely as if they were in the room next door.

The new economy is in vogue on both sides of the Atlantic. Its proponents claim decades of investment in information technology is finally paying off in increased productivity and efficiency. A revolution in the way business operates is ushering in a benign economic outlook.

The combination of high growth, low inflation and low unemployment which Britain and the United States are both enjoying is not a flash in the pan, according to this analysis. Enthusiasts include the unlikely figure of Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, a sage macro-economist not given to following fads.

Mr Hixon's company, Catalyst Technology Solutions, is a service provider to the service sector, a weathervane for the changes the UK economy is undergoing. They provide disaster-recovery services for businesses. If a client is hit by fire or flood, or a computer malfunction, they can reload their companies' data on to the Catalyst system and continue to operate as if the crisis had never happened.



Alone at work . . . Ron Hixon in his Woking office PHOTO: RICHARD OLIVIER

The Woking office stands empty, so if a client's premises have been destroyed, they can move in their whole operation. Catalyst also runs two other larger sites in Stockport and Coventry.

The paradox of running a company with 30,000sq ft of empty office-space and 70-plus employees who work from home appeals to Mr Hixon. When the company workforce gets together for meetings or seminars, there is no shortage of space.

Mr Hixon set up Catalyst with his brother and another partner three years ago. The firm was based on the idea of home-working; it is the key to its structure, enabling it to keep costs lean and keep ahead of competitors.

The company is on the leading edge of a revolution sweeping through business as companies consider the implications of developments in information and communications technology. Worldwide spending on IT has overtaken investment in machines and factories.

"I know no other business that looks like this," Mr Hixon says. "Our competitors find it impossible to copy us because they are stuck in a culture which involves people sitting in offices with a manager in a glass-fronted office watching them and shouting when he wants attention."

Sceptics argue that although companies like Catalyst might be able to exploit a competitive advantage over other businesses through the imaginative use of IT, there has been little positive return for the global hi-tech shopping spree. Economists call it the productivity paradox — despite the investment in computers during the past 15 years, there is little evidence that output per worker has significantly risen.

But Mr Greenspan thinks that the productivity bonus is just around the corner, and that signs of it can already be seen in some areas, such as business services. He points out that there is always a lag between the introduction of a new technology and companies fully exploiting it.

As soon as each Catalyst worker logs on to the main system, his or her computer is updated with any new information. "I can be in the Bahamas and still know what is happening on an account, just by plugging in my computer," says Mr Hixon.

Employees working without a manager peering over their shoulder involves a high degree of trust. Catalyst employee Nick Dean says he probably works harder at home than he would at the office. "There aren't so many distractions, you can just get on and do the job."

This kind of approach is more common in US companies where the IT revolution is more advanced. And there are signs that investment is bearing fruit in the sectors that have invested most heavily in new technology. Mr Greenspan has used these signs to resist calls for rises in US interest rates.

Whereas most economists would be warning that inflationary pressures are building up, Mr Greenspan believes signs of productivity growth in the business services sector is boosting American profits and underwriting low inflationary growth in the whole economy.

Professor Danny Quah, from the London School of Economics, argues that IT is profoundly changing the wheels and cogs of the British economy. Better information and communications management allows the economy to run more efficiently.

Increased competition and more effective production methods are good news for the economy, according to Prof Quah. He believes the trade-off between inflation and unemployment has improved in the US and the UK. That could mean that the British economy can continue to grow while unemployment falls, without re-igniting a wage-price spiral.

This does not mean inflation is dead — but if companies start to re-design their operations to exploit IT to its fullest, the current period of fair economic weather could hold for a while.

Mr Hixon has further plans for revolutionising Catalyst. A new telephone system will soon automatically route calls to workers' home numbers or another location, and divert them to a secretary if the call is unanswered.

Meanwhile the offices stay empty, waiting for disaster to strike, while the virtual workforce talk to each other through the ether.

BT forces $3bn cut in MCI deal

Nicholas Bannister and Mark Tran

BRITISH TELECOM last week cut its offer for MCI by more than $3 billion and challenged the US telecommunications group's investors to accept the new deal or risk a collapse in the value of their shares.

The market heaved a sigh of relief as the two companies announced their agreement to reduce the offer by just under 20 per cent.

The new merger deal with MCI Communications is worth about $23 billion and has to be put to shareholders later in the year.

MCI shareholders are to get less equity but more cash. Their stake in the enlarged group, to be called Concert, will be about 25 per cent — compared with 34 per cent under the original offer.

BT was forced to renegotiate the offer after MCI unexpectedly revealed last month that losses on its attempt to break into the US local calls market would double this year to $800 million, and be even more next year.

The British company has dropped its escape clause from the new package, and has agreed to pay MCI $750 million in damages if BT shareholders fail to approve the revised terms.

As a result of the merger, MCI and BT expected Concert to save $2.4 billion during its first five years, with an estimated annual pre-tax profits benefit amounting to around $800 million by the fifth year.

Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, said that management reviews of both companies concluded that the strategic reasons for the merger were as compelling now as when the deal was announced last November.

Tim Price, the president and chief operating officer of MCI, said that his group would continue its assault on America's $100 billion-a-year local calls market.

The company had blamed its increased losses in entering the local market on ineffective regulation coupled with anti-competitive behaviour by the incumbent local phone groups.

Analysts and institutional shareholders welcomed the deal, with some saying that BT had gone further than expected in cutting the offer.

Société Générale Strauss Turnbull analyst Andrew Moffat estimated that the new deal reduced the agreed value of MCI shares from $41.37 to $32.32. "BT has pulled the cat out of the bag on this one, but it really depends on what the MCI shareholders do now," he said.

"You might get the US arbitrageurs buying up more MCI shares to try and block the new deal, but then they might just decide to take the hit."

Meanwhile fears are growing that a number of small hedge funds which followed the lead of big investment banks in London and New York, by taking out huge bets on BT's merger with MCI proceeding smoothly, may be facing financial ruin.

SCF has a very long term involvement in Somalia, a country which continues to suffer from the effects of war and insecurity. SCF's programme, largely in Belet Weyne, aims to promote our role as a supporter rather than a provider of services by working very closely with communities in development activities.

PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECT COORDINATOR

Kenya based **£20,153 p.a.**

Your key responsibility is to manage and develop the health and water/sanitation projects and related initiatives in Somalia, also to identify future local and national programming opportunities. In addition, an essential part of your role is to support and deputise for the Programme Director and work closely with other projects to ensure an integrated programme.

A qualified health professional, you will also have extensive international experience in community/public health in developing countries. Based in Nairobi, with frequent travel into Somalia, strong distance management and communication skills are essential.

AGRICULTURE PROJECT OFFICER

Somalia based **£18,333 p.a.**

The project started in Belet Weyne in 1993 and SCF is now expanding the work into such areas as seed trials, multiplication and propagation, drought coping strategies and irrigation mechanisms and the improvement of general food security for local communities. Capacity building and supportive management are key issues in working with the established local team.

Together with an agricultural or rural development qualification you will have extensive knowledge of ASAL farming conditions; experience of the new areas of work; and the ability to use low technology, appropriate to local context. Also essential is the ability to ensure effective community participation and to train staff and partners in technical and management aspects of the work.

Both posts have unaccompanied status and are offered on 12 month contracts with salaries which are usually tax free. You can also expect a generous benefits package including accommodation, flights and other living expenses.

For further details please send your CV to Alice Desira, Overseas Personnel, SCF, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD or fax 0171 793 7610. Closing date: 26th September.

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Applications close: **Thursday 25 August 1997.** Provisional interview dates: **1, 5 & 8 September** Start: September 1997 until 30 June 2000.

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Person Specifications
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(2) Strong management skills of projects/programmes
(3) Able to develop capacity of field teams
(4) Ability to co-ordinate efficiently and effectively with different groups.

Applications close: **Monday 22 September 1997.** Provisional interview dates: 9 & 10 October 1997. Early November 1997 until 30 June 2000.

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Applications
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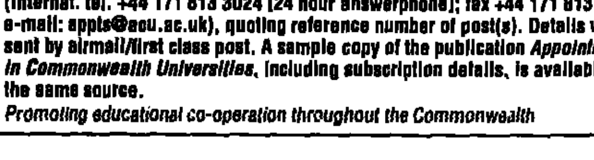
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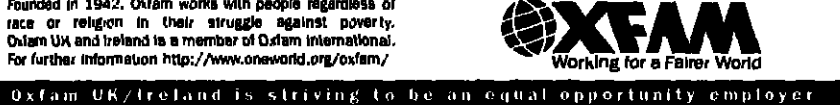
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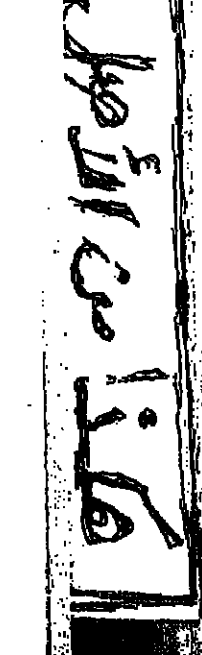
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How to grin and bear it

Yuri Nikulin

YURI NIKULIN, who has died aged 75, was the best-loved man in Russia. His death will be mourned not just by Russians but by tens of millions in the wider Russian-speaking world from Ukraine to Kazakhstan as the actor and comic who more than any other expressed the daily woes and laughter of the Soviet Everyman.

His films were rarely shown in the West, which preferred a more sombre, slapstick-free view of Soviet life, but foreigners living in Russia have come to enjoy the virtually weekly television showings of his screen appearances as pure comedy and a reminder of the possibility of individual happiness under the most loathsome of past regimes.

Nikulin was born just after the end of the civil war, in Smolensk in western Russia. His mother was a garage supervisor and his father a writer of satirical articles — a profession which may have influenced his future career.

He had a long period of military service, from 1939 to 1946, and first took up clowning in 1944 when a political officer in his battalion, impressed by his repertoire of jokes, ordered him to organise entertainment for the division, which he did with resounding success. Demobbed, he tried unsuccessfully to enter drama college before answering a newspaper advertisement recruiting trainees for the Clown Studio at Moscow's Tsvetnoy Boulevard Circus.

He qualified as a fully-trained clown in 1950, and never abandoned his links with the circus. He met his wife Tatyana there, and in 1982 became director of the Moscow Circus, a post he held until his death. His son, Maxim, is now a circus administrator.

His screen debut came in 1958 with the film The Girl With The Guitar. He appeared in almost a dozen major features, mainly in the 1960s and 1970s, but his ascent to star status was assured by a handful of short films directed by the late Leonid Gaidai. The first of these, Samogonchiki or The Moonshine Makers, was also the first to put Nikulin as the fool in a Marx Brothers-like trio with Georgy Vitsyn as the coward and Yevgeny Morgunov as the ex-con.

The trio went on to appear in a series of hugely popular Gaidai films — Pyos-Barbos And The Extraordinary Race; Operation "Iy"; and A Prisoner Of The Caucasus, a romantic comedy set in a caricature Caucasus which seems particularly poignant today. They had only a cameo role in perhaps the best Gaidai picture, The Twelve Chairs, but in 1969 Nikulin landed his biggest role as the unwitting jewellery smuggler in Diamond Hand. He also starred in several of the innumerable Soviet second world war features, most successfully in Twenty Days Without War, made in 1977.

He had no enemies and mixed with politicians from both the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. He was close to Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov and supported Boris Yeltsin's re-election campaign last year. The president considered him a friend and rang the clinic where he was being treated to inquire about his condition. He had a number of state awards, including two Orders of Lenin.

He drew affection from every sphere of today's divided Russian society, from the poorest pensioner to the richest New Russian businessman, from the most highbrow intellectual to the most brutal gangster. One of his circus colleagues said he also managed to unite the warring generations: people of his own age who had returned from the front, people of the 1960s and 1970s who grew up watching him, and the young who were rediscovering him through television. "He was like a kind grandfather," she said. "Kindness was his main feature."

Despite his screen success, he always maintained that the circus was his real love. "I always believed that the most important people in the circus are the ones who force the audience to collapse laughing," he said.

James Meek

Yuri Nikulin, actor and clown, born December 18, 1921; died August 21, 1997



A fragile figure fighting inequality . . . Herbert de Souza addresses a meeting in Brasilia

Saintly champion of poor

Herbert de Souza

HERBERT de Souza — known throughout Brazil as Betinho — who has died aged 61, was a small, fragile figure, who through his energy and integrity came to lead Brazil's long struggle against social inequality, hunger and injustice. He combined Gandhi's commitment to non-violent methods with Che Guevara's ideal of an egalitarian society.

One of eight children, Betinho was born in a town in the rural interior of Minas Gerais. Like two of his brothers, he inherited haemophilia from his mother and contracted TB for three years as a teenager. From an early age he was involved in radical politics, helping to set up the Marxist Acao Popular that emerged from a radical wing of the Catholic Church.

After the 1964 military coup Betinho fled into exile to Chile, Canada, Sweden and France, realising that, as a haemophiliac, he would never survive torture. On his return, in 1979, he set up one of Brazil's first — and most successful — non-governmental organisations, the Brazilian Institute of Economic and Social Studies (Ibase), whose work takes in a range of social problems, from street children to the impact of pesticides on rural workers.

In 1986 Betinho discovered that he had been infected by HIV through a contaminated blood transfusion. Courageously he went public, and set up an effective campaigning organisation fighting discrimination against people diagnosed as HIV positive, and for much more effective screening of donated blood. In 1988, two of his brothers died — Henfil, a cartoonist and Chico Maria, a musician — after contracting Aids.

Betinho became a national figure in 1992, when he helped to found the Movement to Restore Ethics to Politics, one of the key bodies in the campaign to unseat President Fernando Collor de Melo after he had been shown to be involved in a corruption racket. After Collor's demise, he set up what became known as Betinho's Hunger Campaign. It was a response to research carried out by Ibase, which showed that 32 million Brazilians were malnourished.

Betinho's almost saintly aura led to calls for him to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But in 1993 his image was tarnished when it was revealed that Abia, his Aids association, had received money from the notorious *jogo do bicho*, the Rio lottery known to be funded by drug-traffickers. Betinho said that with hindsight he realised that accepting a donation was wrong and later observed that news of it, after finding that he was HIV positive, had been the most painful moment in his life. "The only good thing to come out of it, was that it demystified my image," he said. "People learned that I too make mistakes."

Betinho worked with the present government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and became a member of a new anti-poverty group, Comunidade Solidaria. But he later resigned, protesting that the programme was not receiving the priority the government had promised.

Although he was an atheist, the theologian Leonardo Boff has suggested that the Pope should canonise Betinho during his visit to Brazil in October. He said that "it would be a prophetic act if he were declared the saint of the poor, the patron saint of citizenship".

Just weeks before Betinho died, the health ministry announced that Brazil's 400 blood banks would be subject to international inspection.

Sue Branford and Jan Rocha

Herbert Jose de Souza (Betinho), sociologist; born November 13, 1935; died August 9, 1997

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE

PERSONAL

Letter from Sri Lanka Rosamond Man

Fish tales from the market

IT'S time to do another fish run. Although we get deliveries in Kandy, for the sheer excitement, colour, hustle and bustle, I love the coastal markets. We leave by the light of a quarter-moon at 3am, drive through sleeping villages and arrive at five, just as darkness is giving way to the pale grey of dawn.

Already the place is alive. Brightly-painted wooden trucks are double-parked on the bridge, packed with ice and waiting — doors agape — for the fish to be rushed from the boats.

The first boats circle in. These carry the big fish: shark, barracuda, tuna, sting rays, gleaming seer (Sri Lanka's answer to salmon, white-fleshed, but firm and sweet — a delicacy when smoked), the odd saw fish (much prized for its liver oil). The second shift of boats will bring smaller fish: Indian halibut, reef cod or grouper, breams, snappers of brilliant scarlet. All make superb eating.

In seconds, the boats are surrounded. The auction is on. A huge tuna is held up and everyone shouts at once. Heaven knows how auctioneer or buyer know who has bought what, but they both do. Money swiftly changes hands, the tuna is on a shoulder and moving off as the next fish is already being paid for.

It seems chaotic: fish walk by in every direction while I, taller than most of the fishermen, keep coming face to face with baleful fishy stares. Yet within minutes, the tuna has been turned into a pile of steaks, two ships have been cleared and more are coming in.

Behind, the market is in full swing. The square is one heaving mass of people; the noise from the crowd is tremendous. Here, the women rule. Raucous laughter, jokes and caustic comments emanate from every quarter. Particularly from she who is obviously doyenne of the fish-sellers. She is large, spilling generously over the edges of the tiny stool that is her perch, and youth was an age ago. But she knows her business — and the young men. She excels at quick ripostes to their risqué remarks. Even as she teases, her black shining eyes glance round, missing nothing — certainly not a likely buyer. Gleaming silver fish are poured from her wicker basket into mine. Notes are tucked into the wad safely lodged in that ample bosom.

A commotion catches my attention. Four men, and a myriad tiny boys, struggle to carry a vast ray. At least two metres in wing span, its black-blue, banded tail seems almost as long again. I recall watching these in the clear, deep waters of the Maldives, undulating elegantly just above the ocean bed. Their lazy progress belies the terrible pain their whip-lashing tails can inflict. The ray is unceremoniously dumped and the haggling begins. Several small boys are dispatched to find a saw.

I am seeking something smaller. Squid are neatly heaped on pieces of sacking: large and purple to the left; small and pink to the right; palest rosy babes forming a pyramid in the middle. I buy the pyramid. Beside the squid are sardines, primly stacked head to tail — dazzling lines of silver on the dark brown cloth. Golden-striped paraw and iridescent, green-blue, black-dotted mackerel shine brightly in the now-risen sun.

Crabs, too, tempt: tiny Madonna-blue ones from the lagoon; large, inky, blue-black ones from the sea. A tiny, wizened old woman (beautiful once) expertly pours them into a box and firmly secures the lid. We will hear terrific scratching all the way home, but nothing will clamber over the back seat today.

As I leave, a few fishermen silently fold their nets, looping them into figures of eight like grandmothers' knitting wool. They then lope off to breakfast: a fiery fish curry and sweet, fresh toddy.

Amazon road to ruin

Jan Rocha

A NEW internationally-financed assault on the Amazon rainforest is under way. European, United States and Asian investment banks and multinational agencies are financing dozens of infrastructure mega-projects that will rip open the heart of the Amazon Basin. Roads, railways, gas and oil pipelines, industrial waterways, mining operations and hydro-electric dams are being built or planned. The aim is to provide foreign consumers with cheaper grain, minerals and lumber by reducing transport costs.

Instead of travelling thousands of miles to the South Atlantic ports of Rio and Santos, the new Amazon export corridors will provide Brazil with outlets on the Pacific, Caribbean and North Atlantic coasts, thousands of miles nearer the world's markets. Millions of acres of new farmland on the Amazon fringe will be turned over to export crops, especially soya beans. New dams will provide energy for mining operations, and for the burgeoning Amazon townships.

Seven of these projects are due for completion by 1999. They include the paving of existing dirt roads normally impassable during the tropical rainy season, the dredging of Amazon tributaries to turn them into industrial waterways for giant grain barges, and a 3,000-mile railway that would make 800,000 square miles of land accessible for farming.

Brazil also plans to build a 1,000-mile electricity transmission line, a gas pipeline and 10 new hydro-electric dams in the region. Amazon neighbours Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela and Guyana all have road and energy projects in the border areas.

The development of the Amazon is a product of the economic boom that has followed an end to hyper-inflation in Latin America with the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the integration of the regional economies. Integration means interconnected — instead of rival — transport and energy systems. And the world is full of money looking for such schemes to finance.

But what will be the cost to the Amazon region's original inhabitants of providing cheaper prices for rich world consumers? The five million square miles of the Amazon Basin contain the world's largest tropical rainforest — home to half the Earth's species, and the richest store of biodiversity on the planet. The new export corridors make no provision for environmental protection. Fifty thousand indigenous people live in the Brazilian Amazon alone. For them, there is no mega-project; very often, there is not even the basic minimum.

This week, indigenous organisations from Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela were due to meet for the first time to discuss the impact of the mega-projects, which were drawn up without consultation. They hope to mobilise public opinion and set off a public debate about the consequences for the Amazon rainforest and its people.

A threat assessment report prepared by Amazon Watch, a US-based organisation, lists some of the environmental impacts. The mechanised farming and monoculture plantations encouraged by the transport projects will result in loss of forest cover and native vegetation, and large-scale pesticide pollution. The Madeira waterway will pollute the water used by five indigenous communities. The Araguaia-Tocantins waterway involves draining wetlands — including the Bananal Island, a national park of unique biodiversity — and will affect the way of life of about 6,000 Indians.

Are there alternatives? Are waterways less damaging than roads and railways? Can the export corridors be planned to transverse less biologically significant areas? Will the transport projects provide for the needs of isolated communities? These are some of the questions that have never been posed, let alone answered, in the headlong rush to push the projects through.

The end of hyper-inflation in Latin America has led to development that threatens to devastate the Amazon region PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MAIER

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHICH country has the easiest driving test?

MY NEW ZEALAND driving test consisted of a 15-minute drive around the block while chatting to the cop about the All Blacks. Half way through, and after no manoeuvres or even right turns, he said I had passed and we drove back. New Zealand has an appalling road safety record. — *Martin Wilkinson, Auckland, New Zealand*

IN HONDURAS, a driver's licence costs less than US$7 and takes 15 minutes to issue. No driving test is involved. A voluntary written test of 20 questions earns you a $2 rebate. — *Ian Cherrett, Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras*

CAN pyramid-selling schemes ever work?

DEFINITELY. Send me a cheque or postal order for $20 and I will tell you how. —*Neil Lunt, Auckland, New Zealand*

THE Egyptian and Mexican tourist agencies seem to have done quite well out of them. — *David Lewin, Didcot, Oxon*

THE DUBIOUS schemes are those which require an up-front investment by the participant. They usually dangle the promise of huge incomes from the initial outlay. At the first level the person who starts the business sells to 10 contacts, who sell to 100 who sell on to 1,000, and so on. But eventually, the balloon bursts when investors several levels down cannot find people who will buy from them. These are the people who fund the entire enterprise, the ones whose investment will never be recovered. Those further up will have made back all or part of their investment.

These schemes are marketed as a win-win investment and are sold to people who do not realise how small markets really are. The organisers' answer is that people have failed to sell their stock because they have not tried hard enough. — *Sarah McCartney, London*

WHAT use is vitamin C to an orange?

VITAMIN C (ascorbic acid) is a preservative. The function in oranges is the same as in human beings. It protects components in the tissues from the effect of free radicals. —*Jan Thompson, Karlstad, Sweden*

TONY GREEN'S answer (August 17) cannot be correct. First, what did animals do before plants made vitamin C for them? Or why did plants make vitamin C before animals were there to need it? Second, humans are almost unique among the animal kingdom in being unable to manufacture their own vitamin C. We just take this stuff that plants conveniently have in them, and use it for ourselves, instead of bothering to make it, like every other animal. — *Jeremy Miles, Derby*

HOW did the colour red come to be associated with danger and the colour green with no danger?

IT ALL starts with the fact that the colour of blood is red. For centuries countries have used the colour red in their national flags to symbolise the blood that their heroes lost in their respective independence wars. Examples include Mexico, France, Italy and all African countries with red in their flags. On the other hand, for centuries green has symbolised hope, fertility and, in the Arab world, religion. — *Martin Kleiner, Zurich, Switzerland*

Any answers?

AFTER the establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire, how long did it take for pagan worship to die out? — *Anne McKenzie, Oxford*

WHY is a letter of the alphabet written on the underside of each Smartie tube lid and why are they in uppercase and lowercase and in different fonts? —*John Sawyer, Wellington, New Zealand*

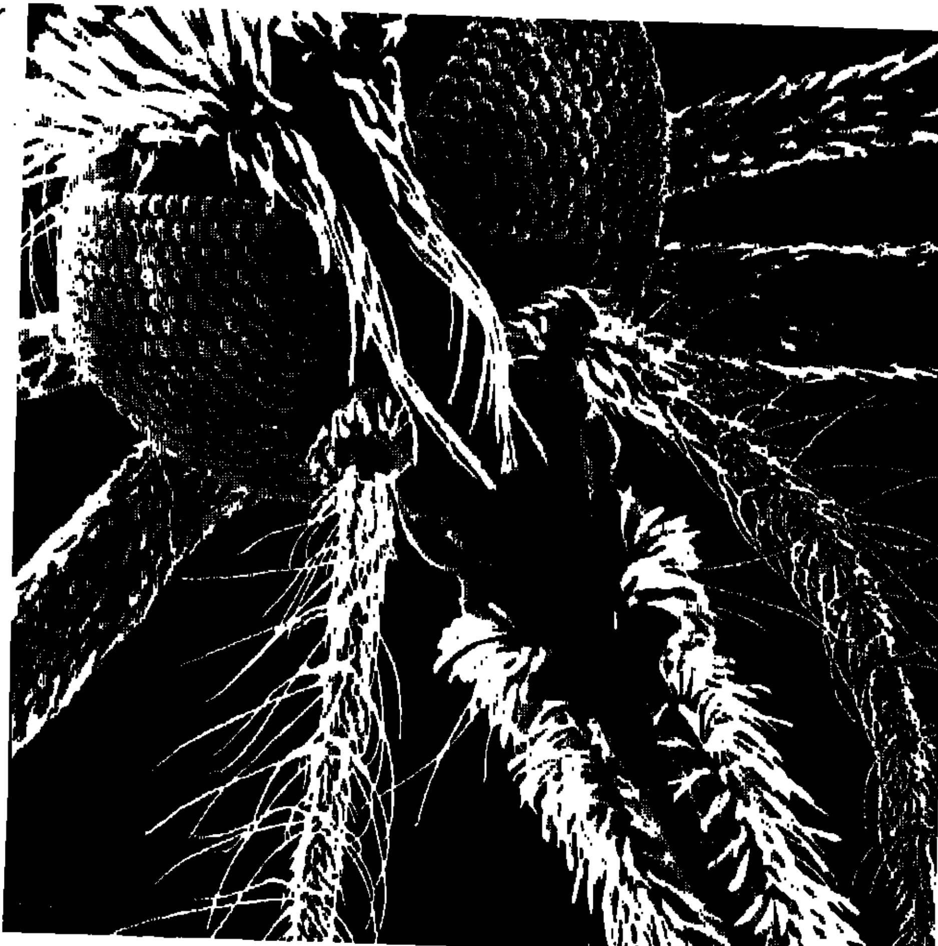
IS THERE any scientific proof that the look of a horse can tell you before a race whether it is likely to win or not? — *Paul Robinson, Manchester*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Nocturnal killer that slipped the net

The experts thought they could conquer malaria. They once predicted 4 million cases by 1980. There are 500 million today, and four babies die of it every minute. **Tim Radford** on a scientific centenary with nothing to celebrate



Electron-micrograph of the head of a female mosquito
SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

FOR THREE decades, until about 1950, there was one reliable treatment for people with late-stage syphilis. You could infect them with malaria. The little thread-like corkscrew organism of syphilis that works its way into the central nervous system and then the brain, causing blindness, paralysis and insanity, has one weakness. It cannot withstand heat. It is killed when incubated above the normal human body temperature of 37C for a few hours.

It was a neurologist in Vienna, in 1917, who hit upon the bright idea of inoculating syphilitics with blood from patients with malaria. He let them go through three or four attacks of fever, and then gave them quinine. The result was a sensation: the syphilitics got no better but at least they got no worse. Tens of thousands were saved from an agonising death, says Robert Desowitz, a United States microbiologist, in his 1992 memoir The Malaria Capers. The Viennese neurologist was awarded the Nobel prize and the technique was used worldwide.

Syphilis apart, few have had a good word to say for the malaria parasite. Last week, 700 scientists meeting in Hyderabad, India, to mark the centenary of a key discovery in malaria research, were given some bleak news. Almost half the world's population is at risk, the existing drugs are losing their impact, and the number of deaths is growing. If global warming continues, the disease could move north — and start roaming its old haunts in Europe.

The word itself is Roman, from *mal' aria*, bad air, after the miasma or fine mist supposed to be the cause of it. It saved Rome, briefly, more than once: Attila's armies were stopped by famine and fever, and Alaric the Goth died of a mosquito bite while besieging the city. But the Romans paid with their lives, too. Hadrian, Vespasian and Titus died of fevers which may have been malaria. The emperor Augustus and Tiberius had recurring bouts of fever, and so did Julius Caesar.

The trouble with malaria was that for the first 5,000 years or so of recorded history, nobody knew what it was, except that it was swift, often lethal, and left its survivors helpless for weeks. In 600BC, Hippocrates noticed that intermittent fever seemed to go with the stagnant water of swamps. He also noticed that sufferers had "large stiff spleens and hard thin hot stomachs, while their shoulders, collarbones and faces are emaciated".

He guessed that some outside agent was the cause, but it took more than 20 centuries before people realised that it might be a creature rather than a miasma, and not until 1880 that Charles-Louis-Alphonse Laveran, a French military physician serving in Algeria, spotted the plasmodium parasite in the blood of a sick artilleryman.

But the hero of the hour — celebrated at the conference in Hyderabad — was Captain Ronald Ross, a military medical man stationed in India. On August 20, 1897, in Secunderabad, Ross extracted a cyst from a dissected mosquito and realised he was about to complete the connection between an insect, a parasite, a human and a terrible disease that today kills a person every 12 seconds.

There are many kinds of mosquito. The one that matters is the group called anopheles. There are about 380 species of anopheles but only 50 or so actually transmit malaria. Of these, only the females drink blood.

But mosquitos are only carriers, or vectors, for the disease. They themselves have to be infected with a parasite called *Plasmodium*. There are four of these: *Plasmodium falciparum, P. vivax, P. ovale* and *P. malariae. P. falciparum* is the variety most likely to kill, and the one humans are most likely to catch. It accounts for 90 per cent of malaria in Africa, and Africa is where most of the deaths are: a million or more a year, most of them tiny children.

The female anopheline mosquito sucks blood by plunging her proboscis through her victim's skin. As she does so, she injects her saliva into the bloodstream. This contains an anticoagulant to stop the blood clotting while she sucks. It also contains thousands of tiny threadlike parasites called sporozoites.

THESE find their way through the bloodstream to the human liver, where they form spores in the cells and multiply. Two weeks later, the liver cells burst and release huge numbers of spores, now called merozoites, into the bloodstream. This is the point at which the sufferer begins to feel feverish and very ill. Each merozoite finds a red blood cell and invades it. It eats the haemoglobin and grows till it is half the size of the cell. Then suddenly the invader divides into up to 24 bits, bursting the red blood cell: each of these 24 particles becomes a merozoite and attacks a new blood cell.

It goes on multiplying in this way until the sufferer develops some form of immunity, or is cured by drug treatment. In either case, the infection remains: it can return, unpredictably, at intervals. Or the patient may die. Death sometimes happens because the victim is weakened — by another disease, hunger, or exposure. Sometimes it happens because the lumps of torn blood cell and toxic waste clog the arteries and constrict the blood flow to the brain: this is called cerebral malaria.

Something else very strange takes place. Having reproduced asexually, some of the merozoites atempt sex: they separate into male and female stages called gametocytes and remain in the human bloodstream, waiting for a female anopheline mosquito to return to feed. For the gametocytes, the mosquito is a lovenest: the females keep still but quiver slightly, the male gametocytes produce whiplike filaments of sperm that fertilise the female. The egg she lays creeps through the mosquito's stomach wall to become a little cyst on the outer surface. A few weeks later, the cyst bursts and thousands of little sporozoites make their way into the mosquito's salivary gland, and the whole cycle begins again.

It took a while for the message to get through. Even in this century, communities clung to the belief that fevers blew in on swamp air. But malaria could be beaten. The story of the fightback begins with the bark of the cinchona tree, which cured the wife of the Spanish Viceroy in Lima, Peru, in 1638. The bark later helped contain fever on a swampy estate south of Madrid. Quinine had arrived.

Nobody understands why a tree in the Andes should hold the therapy for a disease that occurs only in lowlands. But quinine became, in the words of Henry Hobhouse, in Seeds Of Change (1985), one of the "plants that changed the world".

Malaria is a debilitating disease, even when its victims are not racked by recurrent fever. With quinine, however, people could get on with things. The British got on with colonising Africa and India.

Once people understood what spread malaria, and how, they could think of ways to protect themselves: draining marshes, pouring kerosene over pools to choke the larvae, using mosquito nets at night when mosquitoes come out to feed.

Malaria has imposed huge human costs this century. In the Soviet Union in 1923-26, just after the revolution, there were 10 million cases and 60,000 deaths. In Brazil in 1930, infection arrived from Africa by air: 14,000 died. In Ethiopia in 1958, it rained too hard: 150,000 died. It raged through the Americas, even as far north as Ithaca, New York, but the South was hit the worst. Robert Desowitz in a new book, Tropical Diseases (HarperCollins, £18.99), quotes the US Public Health Service in 1919: "For the South as a whole, it is safe to say that typhoid fever, dysentery, pellagra and tuberculosis, all together, are not as important as malaria." In the first quarter of the 20th century, the US suffered on average 6 million cases a year.

The draining of the marshlands hit the disease one way. The arrival of the all-purpose, long-lasting pesticide DDT hit it in another. People became stronger and more prosperous: the southern Mediterranean turned from a depressed area into a tourist playground. Unfortunately, most of the world's wetlands disappeared, taking with them diverse and precious creatures. And DDT killed indiscriminately: it was the villain of Rachel Carson's classic work Silent Spring, because it killed the insects on which birds fed. DDT was banned. By 1960, a confident World Health Organisation had antimalarial policies at work in 100 countries. It was confident that the disease could be all but abolished — 4 million affected, perhaps, by 1980.

Twenty years later, malaria still badly affected 400 million people. Things are even worse today. Estimates vary: one conservative figure puts deaths from malaria at 1-1.5 million each year, but it could be 2.5 or even 3 million if you count the disease as a "contributing factor". Every year 500 million people fall ill. More than 2 billion are at risk: very shortly the number could be 3 billion. Every minute of every day, four babies die because of malaria.

MALARIA'S resurgence can be accounted for in several ways. One is that humans are prone to complacency. Another is that the parasite's life cycle is swift but air travel is swifter: a fresh strain is always on the wing. A third is that nature always fights back: throw a prophylactic drug at a microbe and it mutates to accommodate it. But humans don't mutate, so throw an even more powerful drug and the side-effects become even more alarming. A reliable vaccine seems as far away as ever.

A fourth reason is that medical programmes collapse when war breaks out or a country's social order breaks down. Once India had 75 million cases a year. The number fell to 10,000. Now malaria is back with four major epidemics in the past three years. Once it was eradicated in Azerbaijan: cases there are now reported across two-thirds of the country. Global warming adds a new hazard: the disease never quite left southern Europe, and it could be back in northern Europe within a decade.

But that's a safe bet anyway: air travel means 20 million Western tourists are at risk every year. The WHO now forecasts a 16 per cent growth rate in the disease over the next three years. That means that by 2000 there will be another 80 million cases.

And malaria is not the only old plague to find a new life in a changing world. Two other great killers, diphtheria and tuberculosis, are both on the march again in eastern Europe and Asia. In the Russian Federation, another old enemy is back stalking humans — syphilis has increased 30-fold. And that, too, is likely to be heading west.

Death on the wing





GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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In the United States they call them 'strategic lawsuits against public participation', and **George Monbiot** believes they stifle public debate on important issues. Witness BP and Greenpeace's battle over Atlantic oil

Silencing of the lambs

EVERY month, the weapons mobilised in the public-relations battle over the future of the planet become more sophisticated. A few weeks ago, a leak from the PR company Burson-Marsteller revealed that it has been advising biotechnology companies to "stay off the killing field" of the environment and human health, as "the industry cannot be expected to prevail in public opposition to adversarial voices on these issues". Other means had to be found of confronting opposition to genetic engineering.

Last week, perhaps in response to similar advice, BP shifted the debate about its oil-prospecting work away from the Atlantic frontier and into the courts. On Monday last week, it began a suit against Greenpeace for the $2.2 million it claimed it had lost as a result of the group's occupation of the Stena Dee test-drilling rig near the Shetlands. If the organisation would not pay, BP said, it would hold three members of Greenpeace's staff personally liable. By Tuesday evening, the company was offering to abandon the suit if Greenpeace promised to keep out of its oilfields.

BP has been deploying smart PR bombs throughout this ritual conflict. While Greenpeace sought to draw attention to climate change and the dumping of toxic residues on the ocean floor, BP concentrated on the safety of the activists chained to the oil rig, announcing that it would try to pull them off only if their lives were in danger. It succeeded both in drawing the press away from the critical issues and in presenting itself as a compassionate company that puts human welfare ahead of filthy lucre.

BP's lawsuit, which it delayed until police had removed the activists from the public eye, enabled it to drag the debate still further away from environmental arguments. Public discussion shifted to Greenpeace's assets and whether or not they should or could be seized. BP could distance itself from the dispute — arguing that the matter was now in the hands of the courts — while ensuring that the moral pressure remained on Greenpeace.

Had BP pursued its suit, seized Greenpeace's assets and, as some people predicted, wiped the organisation out, it would have found itself portrayed as an oceanic shark, snapping up defenceless tiddlers. But suits of this nature are seldom designed to succeed. In the United States they are so common that they have acquired a name of their own: "strategic lawsuits against public participation", and the emphasis is firmly on the "strategic". About three-quarters of the charges of conspiracy, defamation or criminal liability big companies pursue against American activists are dropped or thrown out of court, often after years of litigation. But both the charges themselves and the costs of fighting a case tend to stifle dissent.

The first major case of this kind in Britain was pursued by the Department of Transport against people opposing its cutting through Twyford Down. The department's injunction named as many campaigners as it could identify, some of whom had only the most fleeting involvement in the protest. They were held "jointly and severally liable" for the DoT's legal costs and damages — about $3 million.

The department pursued them for three years before it quietly dropped the case. But the lawsuit worked. Hundreds of people with assets kept away from Twyford Down, worried that they too might find themselves subject to the costs order. The campaign was left largely to the property-less and dispossessed, which helped the DoT to portray its opponents as a bunch of workshy trouble-makers, protesting only because they had nothing better to do.

The injunction's success, of course, was dependent on its failure. The last thing the department wanted to do was to seize the home of a respectable taxpayer. McDonald's twice flew senior managers over to England to try to stop the libel case it had initiated against two penniless protesters, but the defendants insisted on fighting to the end. Though they lost on several points of law, they won a resounding moral victory, as McDonald's was forced to carry out its threat to crush the butterfly on the wheel.

BP's lawsuit is one of many indications of an increasingly legalistic approach to public debate. Companies in Britain opposed by animal-rights protesters are now using the anti-stalking laws to stop them handing leaflets to their customers. Construction firms have used secondary-picketing laws to deter roads protesters, while the 1994 Criminal Justice Act and the 1986 Public Order Act provide endless opportunities for criminalising dissent.

New legislation in the US offers even more effective means of suppressing free speech: 14 states have now adopted bizarre "food disparagement acts", banning insulting remarks about perishable food. Last year a group of ranchers filed a suit against the Oprah Winfrey Show, after Oprah expressed her horror at the practice of feeding ruminant offal to cattle. She has kept her mouth sealed on this topic (if no other) ever since.

As both British and American laws tend to be more effective at protecting private property than public assets, the scope for retaliatory counter-suits is limited. Instead, environmentalists should continue to call the corporations' bluff, force them to pursue their suits and let them suffer the public humiliation of a brutal victory. Only then might the big companies be inclined to test their case not in the stuffy enclave of the courts, but in the fresh air and open seas of public debate.

Peter Clarke

Throw in the towel, chaps

Is menstruation the last taboo, asks **Linda Grant**

THE last time the Labour party held its conference in Brighton, a leading member of the party, not known for extended romantic attachments with women, went to visit an old schoolfriend who happened to live in the town. Knowing his life-long tendency for taking himself too seriously and fearing that the prospect of power might go to his head (as some cruel critics have subsequently thought it has), she waited until he was out of the room and put a handful of Lillets tampons in his jacket pocket. Imagine the scene later in the day when, feeling an odd bulge, he scrabbled around to produce a white plug-like object with which he cannot have had much familiarity.

There is something about men and sanitary products that brings out in women the vindictive equivalent of lavatory humour. The collision of the two is commonly thought of as a deflater of male pomposity, reminding men that even Page 3 girls are not pneumatic dolls with a permanent on-switch for sexual activity, but have functioning insides beyond the reach of any penis. The average woman who begins menstruating at 13 and stops at 50 will have about 450 periods during the course of her lifetime, only interrupted by that carefree alternative, pregnancy. Male interest in the subject, however, tends to begin and end with the anxious question, "Has it come yet?" This is sometimes augmented with the dismissive "It's her time of the month".

But suddenly there is a new surge of defensive masculine proprietorship. We thought periods were all ours and now it turns out they thought they were all theirs (or all the parts that matter). Earlier this month, more than 50 advertising agencies failed to capture the $32 million account for a new sanitary product, Instead, produced by the Connecticut-based company Ultrafem, described as a disposable menstrual cup, which it is claimed will replace towels and tampons.

But Ultrafem made a shock decision. It argued that most British agencies bidding to promote Instead's launch next year were disqualified from the outset because their teams had never experienced a single day's menstruation in their lives on account of them all being men. Instead the campaign was awarded to the Gotham Group, founded and run by women.

Immediately a burst of hot air emitted from the world of advertising, complaining of that old saw, political correctness. Others pointed out that women were uniquely unsuited to work on sanitary products because of their lack of "distance" and "balance" from the subject (a disability that does not prevent men from working on lager accounts.)

The men seem to be aggrieved because their own little handle on periods — making money out of them — has been wrenched away and given to women themselves, whose role is to suffer, not profit. To gauge the potential impact of Instead one should remember that there have been no significant advances in the field since the invention of the tampon in the 1930s, if you exclude such faddy refinements of the mousetrap as the winged towel or the adhesive strip that you stick to your knickers. If the menstrual cap is really what it is cracked up to be, the leap may be in the same league as the shift from broom to vacuum cleaner.

While men bravely enter the labour ward to coach their partners' breathing, watch ecstatically as the bloody parcel of wailing tissue emerges that is their son or daughter, they will have no truck with periods. Not even sympathy. Why then should they cry not fair when they are excluded from the glamour side of menstruation — the ligs to faraway beaches in the company of 22-year-old models, the post-strategy meeting champagne?

Let us consider what men have wrought in the field in which they have laboured for so long. In advertising, they have spent decades constructing incomprehensible brand images, most of which are limited to footage of lithe, long-legged girls water-skiing; and it's anyone's guess what fast cars and pounding music have to do with the run to the bathroom when a leak is imminent, the conveyance of one's handbag there to conceal the embarrassing package which contains one's "protection", the cramps, the ruined underwear and sheets, the do-I-don't-I when it comes to sex.

Back in the 1970s, it used to be said that if men had periods, the whole experience would be turned into a sacrament. Instead, menstruating women are considered defiled, required to attend ritual baths by Jews and banned from the altar by some Catholic priests. Even the unsympathetic epithet, the curse, derives from the belief that it was God's punishment to Eve for submitting to temptation. Thirty years ago, Germaine Greer told women that they weren't feminists until they had tasted their own menstrual blood, missing the point as so often she does, trying to construct a ritual where a law is needed.

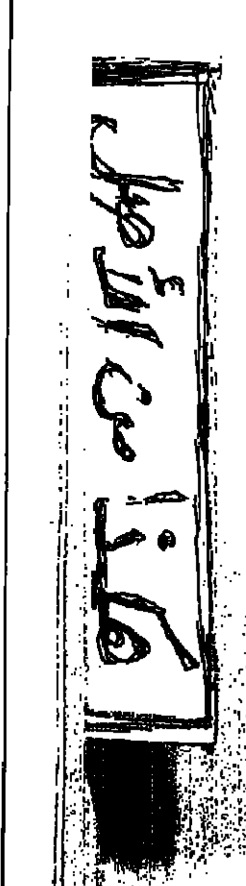
HOMOSEXUALITY and abortion in Britain were legalised in the 1960s, but the last great social reform remains undone — the removal of value-added tax from sanitary products, which are currently regarded as a luxury item. Consider the hole made in the benefit cheque of a mother with three teenage daughters, all of whom have their periods in the same week, dragged by the mysterious lunar pull which brings cohabiting women's periods into line with each other. Every time a private member's bill to remove the VAT is introduced, parliament bursts out laughing. Perhaps this will change when more than a hundred women find themselves crowding round the single, jammed dispensing machine in the House of Commons' loos.

Menstruation may be the last taboo. Advertising standards do not permit sanitary products to be promoted on television before the 9pm watershed. The word "blood" can't be used. So squeamish are we that only recently have Andrex taken the revolutionary decision to depict a toilet in its commercials.

The Gotham Group hopes to challenge the rules. Eliza Parker, the agency's creative director, says that the team has spent the past few weeks in a huddle talking about their own experiences of menstruation. The account "demands us to get at all our preconceptions. It will need a very cautious, clever, intelligent way to approach this. We are desperate to break down the taboos."

We have had incest on Brookside, a junkie swimming down a toilet bowl in search of his heroin suppository in Trainspotting, sado-masochistic fashion shots in this month's Vogue, even the open and frank discussion by movie stars of their penile implants. Yet periods remain firmly on the other side of barriers of taste and decency. Even Aids and herpes and VD and artificial insemination get to be more cool, in their way. There's no glamour at all in a Tampax. Even Thalidomide is more mentionable.

When David Lynch or Quentin Tarantino or Danny Boyle makes a movie in which a used tampon lies casually on the coffee table we will know that the feminist revolution has at last finished its work.



Clubs and hammers

TELEVISION
Desmond Christy

"MICHAEL", said Michael Alig's Mom, Elke, "was always a little instigator." She said this while showing us a photograph of Michael as a pretty, impish little boy. Michael got caught selling candy at inflated prices during his school days in South Bend, Indiana, and we would never ever have heard of him if he had stayed there.

Party Monster (Channel 4) followed the New York career of the little instigator who would do that very difficult thing — shock New York. Michael wanted to be a party promoter. He soon got his way. Those were the days — the Filthy Mouth Contest, the Blood Feast party, the drugs, the champagne enema performed on stage, the whole "perverted sex clown aesthetic" of the party costumes, and the police. Sodom and Gomorrah were just child's stuff compared with Michael's events.

The philosophy of the Club Kids, explained Club Kid prototype James St James, was simple enough, and liberating: "If you've got a hunchback, throw a little glitter on it and go out and dance." And if you were lucky you might meet Michael while he was being funny. He might, for example, have just discovered he had hepatitis and be running around giving everyone French kisses. He had the endearing habit of peeing on people. That was Michael, a real giggle.

Apart from his friends — Gitsie, Kitty, Ernie Glam, Freeze, Screaming Rachel, Angel and so on — there were the other friends. Cocaine, Ketamine, E, tranquillisers, heroin. One night, without telling Angel, they did $3,000-4,000 worth of Angel's drugs (Angel was of the fallen variety).

And then Angel disappeared. He turned up again in April, 1966. Well, most of him did. A legless torso was found in a box floating in the Hudson. Freeze had hit him on the head with a hammer. Michael had then suffocated him with a pillow, poured some kind of cleaning fluid down his throat and taped up his mouth — all tastefully re-enacted for us. Michael told Freeze that he would deal with the body for a few bags of heroin. Freeze supplied the heroin and Michael got to work with a saw in the bathroom. What are friends for?

Screaming Rachel wrote a song called Freedom — Murder In Clubland. It included a little whispered line which said, "Michael, where's Angel?" Clubland was buzzing, whizzing, or whatever. Eventually the police came for Michael and he is awaiting trial. He talked from jail, diminished by prison uniform and sexually assaulted by other prisoners. He looks like he got caught selling candy. He's pleading not guilty because "If you get charged with murder they don't give you a VCR."

His Mum's standing by him, threatening to die if things get bad. Gitsie has promised to smuggle in enough heroin to kill him if he gets a life sentence. Screaming Rachel is promoting Murder in Clubland. James St James is writing a book. Channel 4 is pushing at the boundaries of what can be shown on TV.

Everyone, including Channel 4, gets to make a dollar out of Michael and Freeze murdering Angel. Except Freeze and the little instigator. Oh yeah, and Angel. I was forgetting Angel. They don't give you a VCR where he's gone, either.



Shadow dancers . . . Patricia Arquette and Balthazar Getty in Lost Highway

Nightmare on four wheels

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

AT THE beginning of the screenplay for Lost Highway, David Lynch describes the film in four ways: a 21st century noir horror film, a graphic investigation into parallel identity crises, a world where time is dangerously out of control, and, finally, a terrifying ride down the lost highway.

Each description is true, but each is a simplification, or "phoney baloney", as Lynch calls it. This is the most radical, dreamlike and complicated movie he's ever made, taking over where Eraserhead, his first, left off. And as with the best nightmares, it is wiser not to try to interpret it too much.

There, that lets a critic off from trying to explain the often inexplicable, although Sight And Sound magazine felt obliged to have a go. The plot, wrote Marina Warner, "binds time's arrow into time's loop, forcing Euclidian space into Einsteinian curves where events lapse and pulse at different rates and everything might return eternally".

Bill Pullman is a saxophonist who suspects his wife (Patricia Arquette) of having an affair. He ends up on Death Row, accused of her murder. There, he is transmogrified into another man (Balthazar Getty), who remembers something about the crime. But he's released and returns to a job as a car mechanic, beginning an affair with the scheming mistress (Arquette again) of a wealthy gangster.

The plot doubles back on itself regularly and, with quiet deliberation, refuses to allow you to get your bearings. So you are at one with its characters, driving down a road to nowhere. Purgatory is here and now.

If this does not tempt, Lynch's skill as a film-maker makes Lost Highway, which begins and ends with Pullman's car speeding down a dark desert highway, as watchable as any movie he has made.

Lynch manages to take characters familiar from a hundred other thrillers, and set them against a supernatural mystery, changing their very nature.

The production design, directorial style and a music score from Angelo Badalamenti fuse into something extraordinary, which communicates through sound and images. There is a downside. The film is 134 minutes long and needed stricter editing. At least 20 minutes don't work and persist in thinking they do. But the best is so good as to make Highway a nightmare that is worth suffering.

I'm a reasonably frequent visitor to South Africa, and no film I've seen has matched the veracity of Les Blair's Jump the Gun, which looks at the lower reaches of post-apartheid Johannesburg with none of the usual prejudices.

Blair hadn't been there before. He hired South African actors and used a partly improvised screenplay, which may explain why the film, despite its slim dramatic structure, works so well.

The leads are two recent arrivals in Jo'burg — Clint (Lionel Newton), a white electrician, holidaying off an oil rig and finding his old home totally changed, and Gugu (Baby Cele), black, running from a bad husband and determined to be a singer. Gugu takes a crippled crook as a potential lover, despite the attentions of the manager of the band she's intent on joining. She lives in constant danger.

The story is loose and episodic but illustrates a violent new world. The acting is a revelation. This is not a liberal film-maker just doing his best, but one who understands a complicated society with its many contradictions.

Albino Alligator is Kevin Spacey's first directorial effort. He hasn't quite swung it, but he has potential. A posse of robbers botch a job in New Orleans and land up in a basement speakeasy after killing three federal agents. They take staff and clients hostage as the police gather outside for a siege.

The film is driven more by script and character than plot and is enclosed enough in the bar to seem theatrical, inspired perhaps by David Mamet. But Matt Dillon, Gary Sinise and William Fichtner give more than capable performances.

It can't compete, however, with **Purple Noon**, René Clément's 1960 film revived after 20 years. Clément was attacked by François Truffaut as representing the traditional French films the New Wave was trying to subvert. Many of these films look pretty good to us now, especially this. Based on Patricia Highsmith's book The Talented Mr Ripley, it has Alain Delon as a charming, menacing Ripley. Henri Decae's cinematography of Rome and the Amalfi coast is incomparable. Martin Scorsese recommends it.

New threat to Old Vic

Claire Armitstead on the end of an unlikely alliance as Canadian tycoon Ed Mirvish puts the theatre up for sale

LONDON'S Old Vic Theatre — a Georgian pile near Waterloo station — is up for sale again, with its ghost, its memories and its reputation for losing large amounts of money. The news puts an end to one of the British theatre's unlikeliest alliances — with an 83-year-old Canadian bargain store tycoon and his theatre-impresario son.

Ed Mirvish, whose fortune is based on Honest Ed's bargain store in Toronto, bought the Old Vic with his son, David, for £550,000 in 1982 and spent a further £2.5 million revamping it. In the 15 years since then, they have made losses that have run to tens of millions in various joint ventures. They say they are now retrenching to Toronto, where they own two other theatres as well as a string of restaurants.

The announcement of the sale — just six months after Sir Peter Hall took over the theatre for what was intended to be a five-year experiment in recreating an old-fashioned repertory company — has raised questions over the Mirvishes' motives in making the deal.

"It really is working now. That's what's so sad," said Hall. "I feel a little as if I was brought in to make it look glamorous again. But my main anxiety is that it won't be easy to sell as a theatre."

The Old Vic has historically suffered from being too small and in the wrong place. The early Victorians coined the word "transpontine" for its populist house style, referring to its position across Waterloo Bridge referring to the West End.

More recently, it was the venue for Peter O'Toole's disastrous Macbeth, which was famously disowned by the man then running the theatre, Timothy West.

When the Mirvishes announced last week that they were putting the theatre up for sale with a £7.5 million price tag, all eyes were on Sir Peter and his new company, which seemed to have turned the Vic's fortunes round.

It is currently selling out with Waiting For Godot — due to transfer to Broadway in the new year — and is in rehearsal with King Lear.

But just as important as the Old Vic itself is its annexe — an anonymous two-storey block guarded by iron railings — which has played a key role in the playwrighting renaissance of the last few years.

Under an agreement allowing the National Theatre to use the annexe free of charge, it has become the hub of a development industry which ranges from workshops for actors to play-readings for untried scripts.

Tony Harrison, Jonathan Harvey and Patrick Marber are among writers who have had plays developed behind its closed doors.

Marber's award-winning Dealer's Choice originated there, Theatre de Complicité workshopped their National Theatre productions there, and it is is behind a string of successes for the Royal Court and Bush theatres,

Ed Mirvish would not rule out the possibility of selling the annexe and the theatre separately. "We are open to any suggestion," he said.

While he insisted that "at the moment we are looking for someone who will maintain this historic landmark as a theatre", he did not discount the possibility of selling it for development if no theatre offers materialised.

Comedian bares his soul

MUSIC
Dan Glaister

POOR White Trash and the Little Big Horns? Sounds like some sort of post-modern ironic take on a soul band. And indeed it is. PWT are comedians Lenny Henry and Hugh Laurie on vocals and keyboards respectively, with a bunch of real-life musicians helping Lenny to realise his childhood dream of being a soul star.

Now approaching 40, Henry is indulging his oncoming mid-life crisis. Captivated by the success of his stage character Theophilus P Wildebeeste, a man bigger in stature and deeper of voice than the immense Barry White, Henry got to thinking that this rock'n'roll lark could be fun.

But this is deadly earnest. Henry has even taken singing lessons at the Royal Academy of Music. He now fully inhabits the part, assuming the character of the soul band leader with aplomb and conviction.

The selection cruised through the big fella's record collection: Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Stevie Wonder, James Brown, Bob Marley. Lenny was determined to pay tribute to his heroes, and wasn't about to let the small matter of musical prowess stand in his way.

If his vocals were sometimes lacking, he more than made up for it with energy and enthusiasm. He is an inspired frontman, easy on stage, effortlessly rousing the packed audience to join in the fun.

Although the set comprised mainly of what have, lamentably, become pub-rock standards, the mood was more that associated with the celebratory scenes from the Blues Brothers. "Dare to sweat," challenged Henry. There wasn't a dry body in the house.

As Hilary Strong, director of the Edinburgh Festival fringe, complains about élitism in the arts and the Edinburgh International Festival, Flux, the latest addition to the ever-expanding Edinburgh roster, made the point for her. Flux aims at filling a gap in a town that has six festivals running during August.

The niche that was not being catered for was the contemporary music market. While the classical sector is amply catered for with recitals at the Usher Hall, and pop fans get the occasional visit from a pop dignitary, the ground between the two extremes has stayed barren. Flux attempts to redress the imbalance.

The opening combination, a collaboration between the egghead composer, Michael Nyman, and the whimsy pop types, Divine Comedy, started with 15 minutes from a string quartet performing three Nyman movements to a young nightclub crowd. It was confusing; challenging even. It reminded one of the stories of soldiers sitting in the requisitioned Royal Opera House during the second world war listening to piano recitals. This, surely, had the same spirit: classical music taken out of the stuffy confines of the concert hall and thrust in the face of hoi polloi.

The quartet was joined by Nyman and the contralto, Hilary Summers, for a rendering of If, a Nyman composition. They in turn departed to be replaced by the Divine Comedy, a five-piece pop band, all guitars and tins of lager.

Would the two merge, and to what effect? There followed a succession of Divine Comedy numbers performed with added strings, interspersed with Nyman numbers with extra guitars.

The high point came with the encore, Tonight We Fly. "Would you like to hear a song performed by the person who inspired it?" Divine Comedy's front man, Neil Hannon, asked. What followed, a sort of Nyman on speed, showed what could happen. Classical meets pop on the Fringe: a divine event.

One step from anarchy

THEATRE
Michael Billington

FROM Erwin Piscator to David Farr, directors have been seeking to integrate theatre and film. But the process is taken further than ever in *Blinded by Love*, an exhilarating Catalan spectacle which La Cubana have brought from Barcelona to Edinburgh.

What we see on screen is a kitsch, Almodóvar-style comedy about an orphaned heroine suddenly struck blind on her birthday. Then mayhem erupts in the auditorium as a Spanish Mrs Merton-lookalike claims she is being touched up in the stalls. On screen, the camera pulls back to reveal behind-the-scenes dramas involving the camp director, his imperious mum and the temperamental lead actress. But the real coup comes when the film-makers magically step down from the screen and transfer their personal problems on to the stage.

Jordi Milan, who conceived and directed this irresistible show, is clearly out to dissolve the boundaries between theatre and film, reality and illusion, life and art. But this mad mix of Pirandello and the Crazy Gang works for several reasons. One is that the film we are watching, and which we finally help complete, has its own garish plausibility. The other is that the interaction between screen and stage is accomplished with razor-sharp timing and considerable technical brilliance. The whole show is extremely funny. But behind it lies a perfectly serious point about the way both art and life are, at any given moment, only one step away from anarchy and chaos.

Nikolai Erdman's Russian satire *The Suicide*, written in 1928, has lost none of its political edge even if Gerry Mulgrew's production for Communicado is a shade over-strenuous. Semyon, the hero of this once-banned play, is an unemployed worker who decides to kill himself. Marxists, intellectuals, romantics, artists and businessman all queue up to appropriate his suicide for their own particular cause, only to be confronted by Semyon's reluctance to take the final step. Authentic political satire ("Today more than ever we need ideological corpses," a writer claims) mixes with lunatic farce (a keyhole-peeping postman says of the object of his affections, "I'm looking at her from a Marxist point of view").

At times there is more energy than precision, but highly recommended to anyone interested in Soviet theatre, the Russian temper or genuinely dangerous satire.

Lyn Gardner adds: Pig and Runt are just 17, caught in the hormonal rush between childhood and the adult world. They are best pals in the whole world, with different mothers but joined like Siamese twins with an invisible thread. This is a thread that is stretched to breaking one night on the town in Sin City (Cork, to you and me) when, in silver lamé, the pair scoff scampi fries, snuffle and snort at the grown-ups, get beaten up and uselessly search for the "colour of love". *Disco Pigs*, Enda Walsh's tender, violent story of growing up and breaking away, is written in a dazzling rich swill of Clockwork Orange-style language of disordered syntax and cut-off words. The production, stunningly performed in a pig pen cum play pen, is all swagger, sass and hormonal imbalance.

Get your snout in the trough.



La Cubana: brilliant method behind the madness

Beastly behaviour . . . Mark Morris's mock-Baroque Platée — PHOTOGRAPH BILL COOPER

Eye-popping swamp romp

OPERA
Andrew Clements

ONE of the Royal Opera's aims during the next two years of homeless wandering is to broaden its repertory and present works that, for whatever reason, are unsuitable for the main house in Covent Garden. True to its word, the company's first new production since closure is a Rameau opera, the first time any of his stage works has been produced by a major company in this country. Directed and choreographed by Mark Morris, Platée will come into the Royal Opera season at London's Barbican Theatre next month after this short spell at the festival.

Morris has directed opera before — his production of Gluck's Orfeo was seen in Edinburgh last year — but Platée, with its witty fusion of music and dance, suits him much better, and with dazzling designs by Adrianne Lobel the whole show becomes a visual treat. Rameau wrote the score in 1745 for a wedding celebration at Versailles, though the plot isn't ideal for newlyweds. The god Jupiter is forever quarrelling with his wife Juno, so the king Clitheron proposes a diversion: Jupiter pretends to fall in love with Platée, a hideous and vain swamp-living amphibian, who believes she is so beautiful that she only has to wait and one day her prince will come. She thinks that day has finally dawned when Jupiter appears on the scene, but as the wedding vows are about to be sworn Juno arrives, the joke is revealed and god and goddess are reunited. All Platée can do is wander back to her swamp.

The humour is cruel, and definitely not politically correct. Ugliness is mocked and cruelly abused. But Morris's treatment keeps its tongue very firmly in its cheek. Taking his cue from Rameau's own parodies of the operatic conventions of his time, he manages to send up the whole idea of baroque opera. There is a running gag with the *deus ex machina*, the gilded chariot in which Jupiter descends from the heavens, and every chance to subvert the usual routines of baroque dancing is seized upon. Platée's swamp is transformed into a giant vivarium, complete with artificial plants and water dish — you expect a giant hand to appear at any moment and offer the inhabitants a supply of grubs — while the prologue that invokes the story is switched to a sleazy downtown bar, populated by a motley collection of low life and the odd mythological character.

Under conductor Nicholas McGegan, the music never loses its rhythmic impetus — a shame, though, that the orchestra isn't a period one. There are some first-rate performances, especially from Jean-Paul Fouchécourt in the title role, who sings some taxingly high tenor lines with great style and acts superbly in the extraordinary costume and make-up, half frog, half extra-terrestrial, designed by Isaac Mizrahi. Mark Padmore is a suave Mercury, Francois Le Roux a suitably pompous Jupiter, while Susan Gritton makes a fetching Lizard-in-Waiting, and Nicole Tibbels cuts a dash as La Folle.

The chorus sings from the pit, leaving the stage and the limelight to the dancers from Morris's own company, who erupt across the stage at every available opportunity, and turn Rameau's parade of wildlife into a romp. There's something for every taste in the dances: a quartet of satyrs complete with leather jockstraps and nipple rings knock each other about a bit; two babies, a boy and a girl, clad only in nappies carry on their own exploration of the world; Platée is carried to the wedding by a pair of frogs, and a pair of tortoises mate as slowly as only a pair of tortoises can: It's a bit like The Tales Of Beatrix Potter, only far sexier and more dangerous, and with infinitely better music.

Bellow keeps doing the business

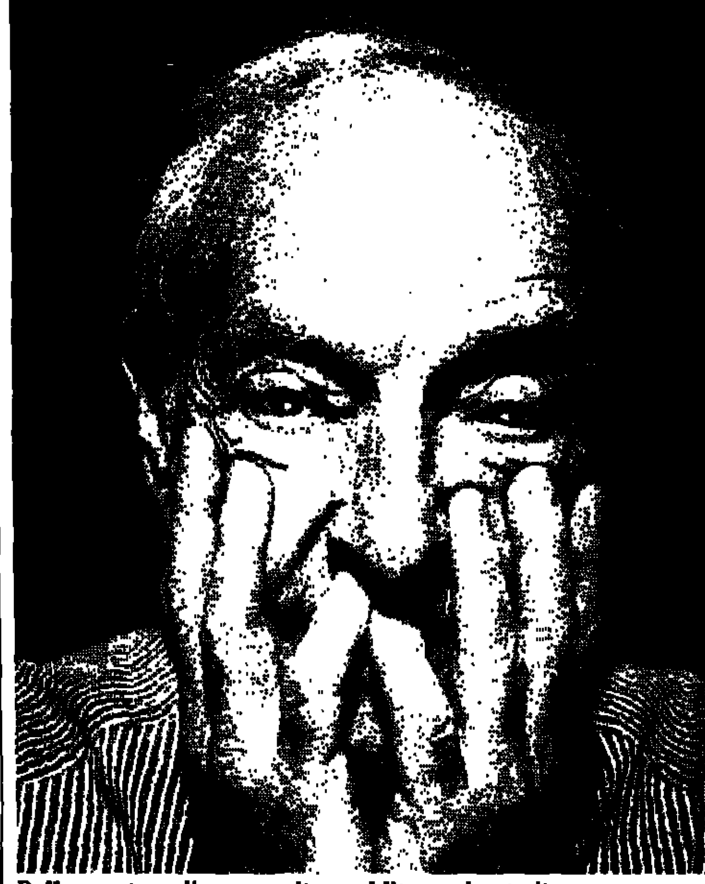
Martin Amis

The Actual
by Saul Bellow
Viking 112pp £12.99

NOVELISTS don't age as quickly as philosophers, who often face professional senility in their late 20s. And novelists don't age as slowly as poets, some of whom (Yeats, for instance) just keep on singing, and louder sing for every tatter in their mortal dress. Novelists are stamina merchants, grinders, nine-to-fivers, and their career curves follow the usual arc of human endeavour. They come good at 30, they peak at 50 (the "canon" is very predominantly the work of men and women in early middle age); at 70, novelists are ready to be kicked upstairs. How many have managed to pace themselves through and beyond an eighth decade? Saul Bellow's The Actual has a phrase for this kind of speculation: "cemetery arithmetic". The new book also confirms the fact that Bellow, at 82, has bucked temporal law.

And bucked it twice over, it may be. Fifteen years ago, I believed that Late Bellow, as a phase, had begun with The Dean's December. The visionary explosiveness of Bellow's manly noon (Augie March, Herzog, Humboldt's Gift) seemed to have hunkered down into a more pinched and wintry artistry; the air was thinner but also clearer, colder, sharper. Then came the unfailing mordant and accurate Him With His Foot In His Mouth And Other Stories. And then came More Die Of Heartbreak, which now looks like yet another transitional work: a final visitation from the epic volubility of the past. The author has turned 70. But this wasn't Late Bellow. Late Bellow, or Even Later Bellow, was just about to crystallise.

In an essay of 1991, Bellow quoted Chekhov: "Odd, I have now a mania for shortness. Whatever I read — my own or other people's works — it all seems to me not short enough." And he added: "I find myself emphatically agreeing with this." Later Bellow consists of three novellas (A Theft, The Bellarosa Connection, The Actual) and two short stories ("Something to Remember Me By" and "By the St Lawrence"), the whole running to about 300 pages. Shortness, certainly, is to some extent enforced.



Bellow: extraordinary gravitas and literary longevity PHOTO: NIGEL PARRY

And when one casts about for comparable examples of literary longevity, one seems to be moving naturally and inevitably towards a realm of sparer utterance.

Of course, the picture may change again. Pretty well the only useful sentence in a thoroughly superfluous memoir by Bellow's former agent Harriet Wasserman — Handsome Is: Adventures With Saul Bellow (published in the US by Fromm) — reports the existence of two uncompleted novels. And even that disclosure feels impertinent. When I reflect that her volume is a mere look-see compared to James Atlas's massive anatomy — the Life, due next year — I find my protective instincts strongly stirred. Among many other things, The Actual reminds us that the fiction is the actual, the truthful record. As its narrator, Harry Trellman, observes:

> Your inwardness should be — deserves to be — a secret about which nobody needs to get excited. Like the old gag. Q: "What's the difference between ignorance and indifference?" A: "I don't know and I don't care."

Although Bellow has spoken of "the more or less pleasant lucidity" attainable "at this end of the line", it is not the kind of lucidity that deals in admonitions, "answers" ("nobody expects to complete their feelings any more. They have to give up on closure. It's just not available"). It All Adds Up was Bellow's cheerful title for his collection of discursive prose, but the imaginative life allows for no confident aggregations. The author of Dangling Man (1944) was far more inclined to assert than the author of The Actual.

AND WHEREAS, for example, Mr Sammler's Planet presented the Holocaust as a graspable historical event, The Bellarosa Connection refuses it all understanding. The story "By the St Lawrence" contains a deeply apposite figure: "Intensive-care nurses had told him that the electronic screens monitoring his heart had run out of graphs, squiggles and symbols at last and, foundering, flashed out nothing but question marks." Later Bellow is a distillation, but not a distillation of wisdom. These meditations are concerned with human attachments, most obviously or publicly the consanguinity peculiar to the Jews.

Confronted by the obsessive torments of a middle-European refugee, the narrator of Bellarosa silently advises: "Forget it. Go American." The advice is of course frivolous, a symptom of the "American Puerility" he detects in himself; but it's a popular option.

Ravaged and haunted, the surviving elders look on helplessly as their children submit to American lunkification, homogenised by a carnal culture. The Jews have a special centrality, reconferred on them by the 20th century; but now they are shedding their quiddity, their ties of remembrance, and their talent for the transcendental. Towards the end of Bellarosa the narrator encounters just such a Jew-gone-native, who mocks him for his old-style sentiments. The last page beautifully registers the weight of what is being lost:

> Suppose I were to talk to him about the roots of memory in feeling — about the themes that collect and hold the memory; if I were to tell him what retention of the past really means. Things like: "If sleep is forgetting, forgetting is also sleep, and sleep is to consciousness what death is to life. So what the Jews ask even God to remember, 'Yiskor Elohim'."
>
> God doesn't forget, but your prayer requests him particularly to remember your dead.

Loved ones can absent themselves without dying, and Later Bellow is adorned with many variations of amorous regret, grief, nostalgia, and thought-experiment. No one writes more inwardly about women than Saul Bellow. Look at Clara Velde, from A Theft, fully incarnated in a single sentence: "The mouth was very good but stretched extremely wide when she grinned, when she wept."

While you love, that which is innate in you becomes malleable; so love shapes you. In "Something to Remember Me By" and "By the St Lawrence" this shaping goes all the way back — to moments of youthful awakening, qualified by a complementary accession to death. The con-girl seductress, the child in the coffin, the wait outside the bordello, the body on the railtrack: Bellow makes me feel the mortal hold of these raw configurations.

The Actual is even more scrupulously written than its immediate predecessors. We notice the "dried urban gumbo of dark Lake Street", we glimpse a silhouette "in the gray bosom of the limo TV", an ancient billionairess is "like a satin-wrapped pupa". But after 80 years of passionate cohabitation, the author's relationship with language has evolved into something like sibling harmony. Bellow's prose remains a source of constant pleasure because of its immunity to all false consciousness. It plays very straight. "There is great variety in my dreams," one Bellow hero confides. "I have anxious dreams, amusing dreams, desire dreams, symbolic dreams. There are, however, dreams that are all business and go straight to the point." Later Bellow is something like that: all business.

As I was putting this piece to bed, the launch issue of a literary magazine arrived on my desk: The Republic Of Letters, edited by Saul Bellow and Keith Botsford. Its lead piece is a new Bellow story, entitled "View from Intensive Care" and tagged "from a work in progress". Picking up on certain details in "By the St Lawrence", it describes a medical close call — with heroic, terrifying, and near-comical detachment ("Taking note is part of my job description. Existence is — or was — the job").

Well, existence still is the job. And while the new story increases the scope of Later Bellow, nothing qualitative has changed. There is a great deal going on in these short fictions, tangled plots (for tangled lives) and intense formal artistry. But what accounts for their extraordinary affective power?

When we read, we are doing more than delectating words on a page — stories, characters, images, notions. We are communing with the mind of the author. Or, in this case, with something even more fundamentally his. Bellow's first name is a typo: that "a" should be an "o".

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £9.99 contact CultureShop (see left)

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

X20, by Richard Beard (Flamingo, £6.99)

GREGORY SIMPSON, a man who has been paid by a cigarette manufacturer to smoke exactly 20 cigarettes a day for 10 years, is now trying to give up: this novel is his way of keeping his hands busy. It's a great idea, and almost flawlessly executed.

Beard's great strength is that it does not take us too long to pick up exactly where we are in the narrative from only the barest of clues. Cigarettes represent a concentration of emotional obligations: his father owns a chain of tobacconists, but his mother has made him promise not to smoke at university, where he meets a woman who will not sleep with him unless he smokes; his uncle, a 60-a-day Capstan smoker, died in middle age of cancer; and, continually, there is the awful they'll kill you/you might get run over by a bus argument.

Much of the book is about gambling. It is beautifully achieved. One thinks, fancifully, of the construction of a cigarette itself, a unity composed of thousands of different strands. "An addiction is held in place by an elaborate system of deceptions" runs an epigraph; so is a novel, when you come down to it.

Hermits: The Insights of Solitude, by Peter France (Pimlico, £10)

CHARMING look at hermits through the ages, starting off with Lao-Tse's avoidance of societal obligations, via the desert fathers, the Russian Startsy and Thoreau, to Robert Merton and the contemporary hermit and poet Robert Lax, who lives on Patmos and would seem to have more friends on the island than is commonly indicated by our understanding of the word "hermit". Anyway, France thinks the solitary life is wonderful, quotes thousands of wise sayings to back this up, but does not quite stop to ask himself what would happen if everyone decided to live in a cave.

Liberty Against the Law: Some Seventeenth-Century Controversies, by Christopher Hill (Penguin, £9.99)

THE young Milton is quoted here, listening to lawyers "shouting at each other . . . [in] a jargon which one might take for some Red Indian dialect, or even no human speech at all"; he wonders whether, in fact, they are human. Good question. The chapter on lawyers is very short, but the matter of inequality before the law informs and drives the whole book, which is all about how "liberty" in Britain came to be tied to private ownership. Lots of Diggers, Ranters, Levellers, Fifth Monarchists and the like. Splendid.

Junk Food Monkeys, by Robert M Sapolsky (Headline, £9.99)

COLLECTION of essays by a populariser of science, praised by Dr Oliver Sacks as "one of our best scientist-writers", and what he is praising, you feel, is not necessarily the prose style but its accessibility. So we have stuff on the benefits of schizotypal behaviour, our fondness for gossip, and the psychology of firing-squads. All good stuff, although he prefaces his chapters with reproductions of modern paintings of unrelieved awfulness.

Elusive world of India's eunuchs

Kate Teltscher

The Invisibles: A Tale of the Eunuchs of India
by Zia Jaffrey
Weidenfeld 293pp £15.99

A YOUNG Indo-American woman, staying in Delhi, is invited to a cousin's wedding; amid the elegance and chit-chat, she is stunned by the arrival of a raucous group of men dressed as women. Or so she thinks. She learns that these uninvited guests are the *hijras*, or eunuchs, who sing lewd songs in cracked voices and hurl insults at bride and groom. Like court jesters, they parody proceedings until paid to leave.

So starts Zia Jaffrey's absorbing study of the eunuchs of India, a work that begins like a novel, turns into a travel account, then becomes a record of Jaffrey's anthropological and historical researches in Hyderabad. The hijras tell their own stories, alongside sundry informants and misinformants. The accounts are often confused and contradictory, but then the history of the community is uncertain, its rituals secret, and the hijras themselves sworn to silence.

The first problem lies in the definition of a hijra. The word means neither male nor female, and covers hermaphrodites and transvestites as well as eunuchs. Jaffrey decides to use "she" when writing of the hijras, but notes that the hijras themselves speak of each other as "he".

Little can be stated about the hijras with certainty. The community may number anything between 50,000 and 1.25 million. They ignore distinctions of caste and religion and hold sacred both Hindu deities and Muslim saints. Some hijras claim to have castrated themselves with a single stroke of a knife, others tell of private "operations" performed by midwives.

Press reports allege that hijras gain new recruits by kidnapping boys and forcibly castrating them; however, all the hijras whom Jaffrey interviews either say that their parents donated them to the community in childhood, or claim that they joined voluntarily, after years of abuse from their families.

What emerges most clearly is that the hijras live on the very edge of Indian society and legality. This was not always the case. Jaffrey meets elderly Muslim aristocrats who recall the power hijras held when they were employed by noble families. Unlike other servants, they could move between the men's and women's sides of the house and so effectively ran domestic affairs. Because eunuchs were "safe", they were trusted, and often received grants of land in recognition of service.

Jaffrey's fascinating archaeology of the hijras uncovers rich layers of hearsay and conjecture. She is at her best when recounting her adventures in a shrewd, self-effacing voice. Her narrative is punctuated with long extracts from 17th century European travels, Persian histories, colonial legislation and medical textbooks. While Jaffrey sets out to demystify the eunuchs of Western imagination, she knows that in place of oriental barbarity and decadence, she only has unreliable narratives to offer.

If Jaffrey begins with few preconceptions, she closes with few conclusions. There is a striking moment when Kamal Baksh, who at first denies the practice of castration, offers to lift her sari to show what lies beneath. When this moment of disclosure arrives, Jaffrey is repelled and rejects the offer. Like the hijras, her book remains tantalizing and elusive to the end.

Objects of desire

Nigel Spivey

Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens
by James Davidson
HarperCollins 372pp £25

"FISH is probably the food for the nineties," says Delia Smith in her Guide To Fish Cookery. "I shouldn't be surprised," she chirrups in her Winter Collection, "if fish became the food for the 21st century."

Delia's evangelism would have been well received in Classical Athens, where fish were admitted to gastronomic circles and therefore to philosophical discourse. Once scavenged in Homer's pre-urban world, fish were now sold in the democratic city, their glittering scales likened to the myriad coins of a market price. Meat belonged in the sanctuary, fish in the domestic kitchen: but fish was still an extra, a non-staple within the usual daily ancient diet of cereals and pulses. So fish becomes, in James Davidson's account, an obscure but telling object of desire; a moral plateful.

The title of the book misleads. Ancient Romans were much more passionate about their fish than ancient Athenians, and probably no less interested in courtesans too. But I suppose that though we all know the Romans were decadent and gluttonous, our image of Athens in the age of Pericles and Plato is a purer confection. Democracy, geometry, fine art and great drama: these are among the known glories. A book which drags our attention from the Parthenon to the sidewalk has a clear revisionary aim.

It is not polemical as such. Some years ago an attempt was made (by Eva Keuls) to depict Classical Athens as a repellent "phallocracy", where abuse of women was routinely vicious. Her charges — many quite justified — were undone by angry zeal. Davidson is more laid-back, apparently of the *plus ça change* school. Drawing heavily on the records of the Athenian law-courts, he may be aware that he risks showing the legally impugned as common practice. The result is a studious and liberal narrative about indulgence in sex, drink and food, in which saucy anecdotes are regularly supplied.

Delia Smith confesses that she has "a thing about fishcakes". We do not know whether the playwright Sophocles shared the fetish, but we are told that he had a thing about young boys, and was a notoriously assiduous pederast.

Fall and decline . . . one of the photographs in *A House is Not a Home*, by Bruce Weber (Little, Brown, £70)

Early on in Plato's Republic there is a vignette of Sophocles in old age, being asked if sex still gives him pleasure. "Thank God," he replies, "I have at last been released from that savage master." Davidson does not quote this line, but it would suit his case well. The Greek phrase used by Sophocles, describing erotic desire as an *agrios despotes*, indeed implies release from cruel slavery. But *agrios* also implies a bestial state of nature, a doggy impulse of self-gratification. Passable in dogs, perhaps: not for those Greeks mindful of Apollo's precept, "Nothing in excess".

This is why to enthuse over turbot or bream became an ethical, indeed political debate. Just as one theory about civil war in Bosnia holds that it began as an over-the-fence quarrel between two Sarajevo neighbours, so according to Plato a coup d'état may originate in one man's surrender to the tyranny of desire. Feasts, parties and prostitutes lead to debt; debt to petty crime; petty crime to associations of criminals; associations of criminals to the overthrow of order.

On the other hand, teetotallers were generally recognised as bores. Alcoholism was recognised as a debilitating condition, and some Hippocratic medics thought that the male supply of semen was a limited reserve, whose over-expenditure brought physical bankruptcy. But there was no shame in the pursuit of pleasure. Moral discourse focused almost entirely on self-control.

So when Diogenes the Cynic masturbated openly in the marketplace, he was exhibiting a moral point. Keep it in hand, under control. As Diogenes told bystanders to his display: if a certain man had resisted the impulse to rape Helen, and gone home to have a quiet wank instead, the Trojan war would never have happened.

In our present culture of personal well-being, Davidson's topic has obvious appeal (HarperCollins is not the usual outlet for an Oxford D Phil dissertation). However, whether he seriously revises what we think of the Greeks is doubtful. His final image, contrasting the skeletal figures of Buddha under a tree and Christ on the cross with stout Socrates on his banqueting couch, is hardly telling. This Socrates, after all, is the same Socrates who walked barefoot over ice: the philosopher for whom the body, fish-fed or not, was merely a tent for the soul.

Short and sweet, but art?

Elizabeth Young

Ten Women Who Shook the World
by Sylvia Brownrigg
Gollancz 160pp £12.99

My Life as a Girl in a Men's Prison
by Kate Pullinger
Phoenix House 222pp £15.99

WITH the novel mired in autobiographical mediocrity, the short story appears to have become the last bastion of originality in fiction. And it seems to know it too. Short stories are forever crowding around one, pushing and shoving like aggressive street performers, each madly promoting some delirious conceit or more outré trick.

Sylvia Brownrigg's stories fall squarely into this more-creative-than-thou category. Her imagination is notably inventive and untrammelled. These stories star women who build the wonders of the world — the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China. The heroines also find libraries at the bottom of ponds, are best friends with owls and persimmon trees or have serial love affairs with moons; eventually the author finds herself coming out with sentences like "Her sea-coloured eyes frothed comprehension".

Oddly enough, the most outlandish story of all is the most successful. "The Bird Chick", set in the sixties, describes a woman who instructs wildfowl in drama and enables them to perform Hamlet in Central Park. This caprice works beautifully in terms of metaphor, linguistic comment, nostalgia and pathos. In general, Brownrigg is a writer with a sophisticated and elegant feeling for words who is able to run far with the myriad potentialities of language. The work is cute and clever. It seems perfectly pitched at a level that will interest readers, even against their will, without disturbing them unduly. Whimsical and entertaining, her stories can at some times suggest great depths, at others no more than random imagery burnished with a patina of elliptical import.

However hard Kate Pullinger tries to negotiate the gothic or extreme, she usually ends up dealing in more unpretentious, day-to-day realities. She often gives the impression of someone who wants to be a writer far more than she naturally inhabits the role, meaning that her literary ambitions frequently exceed her visionary capacities. Often it seems as if she substitutes dedication, craft and discipline for imagination, and this gives her work a slightly strained air. Her attempts at the bizarre and outlandish seem no more than a necessary formality in the current wacky world of the short story. Yet both the first story, "Small Town", with its tender teasing-out of all that is most evocative about — of all things — pigeons, and the quiet disorientation of another one, "A Spectacular View", resonate in the memory.

Many of the newer stories here were inspired by a year Pullinger spent teaching in a men's prison, but the results are no more than the intelligent and liberal conclusions one might overhear at a dinner party. Notable for bravery is the long story "Iris" in which she tries to inhabit the mind of a murderer whilst unconsciously revealing how everything in her psyche would



Brownrigg . . . inventive

mitigate against such an act.

Pullinger is only really lyrical and inspired when writing about sex. Erotic intimacy frees her prose from the tensions of rationality and enables her to demonstrate an instinctive ability to conjure powerful and intricate currents of feeling.

Together, these two collections evoke a sophisticated greeting cards shop. The stories run the gamut from comic and surreal to serious and concerned. They are all impeccably contrived, testifying to hard work and sharp minds. They are well designed, they have designs — but have they anything to do with art?

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Raptors' return to the Highlands

Paul Evans

A *SPINE-TINGLING* shriek seems to split the birch woods on the craggy hill, allowing the great wings to take to the sky and the sun to flash gold on the plumage. My first evening in the Highlands of Scotland and I encounter an eagle. In the pantheon of wild creatures, the golden eagle is surely one of the most enigmatic and powerfully evocative. It seems unimaginable now that these almost mythic birds could have been so persecuted.

When the Highland Clearances removed the people from the mountains and replaced them with sheep, and powerful landowners carved out their huge deer and grouse shooting estates, the eagles were almost reduced to extinction. Many other birds of prey were similarly attacked. White-tailed eagles had been exterminated by the end of the 19th century and hen harriers, peregrine falcons and red kites were almost completely wiped out when the use of powerful pesticides during the 1950s and 1960s compounded the assault on them by gamekeepers.

Perhaps the most famous bird of prey persecuted in the Scottish Highlands, and the one which became an icon of conservation, is the osprey. This fabulous black-and-white raptor dives for salmon and trout in the lochs. Because of shooting and egg collecting, ospreys were completely wiped out as a breeding species in Scotland by the beginning of this century. Ospreys migrate in winter to Africa and, during the fifties, attempts were made to induce the few that returned to Scotland in summer to breed again at Loch Garten at the northern edge of the Cairngorm mountains. Since then, thanks to intensive protection work by the RSPB and some sympathetic landowners, the population of ospreys has returned to 100 breeding pairs.

In recent years, white-tailed eagles have been reintroduced from Norway, and there are now 10 pairs breeding successfully. Red kites have also been reintroduced, with 15 pairs now breeding; hen harriers now number 570 pairs, and eagles 420. Peregrines have returned in force, and Scotland has one of the strongest populations in the world.

Despite these successes, there is no cause for complacency. Old prejudices die hard, and the illegal killing of birds of prey is widespread with about 100 cases reported each year. There is also plenty of pressure from the game lobby to reinstate the killing of raptors under licence, but conservation bodies have so far been successful in resisting this. Visitor pressure, tourist development and other environmental threats to vulnerable habitats mean that conservation must become ever more sophisticated in its efforts to link ecological and economic regeneration. Despite the rubbish talked about sustainable tourism, it's quite obvious that in many places even the status quo is unsustainable. As one RSPB officer told me with some irony, "Conservationists will never be out of a job in the Highlands."

Although I was fortunate in seeing eagles on the hills, Slavonian grebe in remote lochs, crossbills in pine forests and even snow bunting on the high Cairngorm summits, I had still not seen an osprey. Resigned to being satisfied with the wonders of the Highlands I had experienced, I was waiting on the platform of the railway station at Aviemore for the return train. Suddenly I spotted a large raptor circling beyond the village. It closed its wings and dived at breathtaking speed out of sight, re-emerging to hover again. This was an osprey. In fact there were three of them, hunting in the local fish farm.

This wonderful sight gives hope for the relationship between people and wild nature. As Robert Graves said, "This is a wild land, country of my choice." The wild lives of these wild lands have no choice; they must rely on ours.

Chess Leonard Barden

THE CAREER of Vassily Smyslov, now aged 75, is a paradox. He had the shortest reign of all world champions — just a year, from his 1957 win over Botvinnik to his defeat in their return match — but his longevity at the top has outlasted even Emanuel Lasker, who at 67 played with the best of his time.

Last month, Smyslov showed that he is still a great master with the best individual score, 6½/10, in the annual Veterans v Women match, where former greats take on the world's best current women players.

Smyslov makes no secret of his methods: he eschews sharp openings, relies on his intuition and strategic sense, and likes to cash in endgame advantages. The Four Knights, new to his repertoire, here gives the kind of niggling edge which he enjoys.

Smyslov-Xie Jun

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bb5 Bb4 5 0-0 0-0 6 d3 d6 7 Bg5 Bxc3 8 bxc3 Qe7 9 Re1 Nd8 10 d4 Ne6 11 Bc1 c5 12 a4 Rd8 13 Bf1 Nc7 14 h3 Bd7?! Rb8 saves a tempo. **15 g3 b5 16 Nh4 bxa4 17 Nf5 Bxf5 18 exf5 Ncd5 19 Ra3 Qc7 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 Qe2 Rab8 22 Bg5!?** 22 Qxe5 is playable, but Smyslov sees a clear line. **h6 23 Bxf6 Nxf6** gxf6 saves a pawn but risks the king after 24 Qh5 Kh7 25 Rxa4 Nxc3? 26 Rh4.

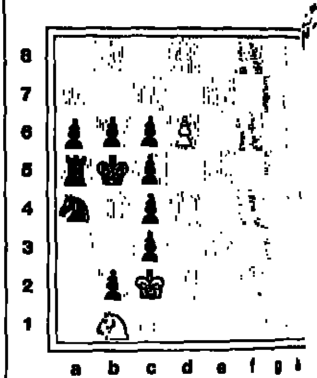
24 Qxe5 Qxe5 25 Rxe5 Rd2 26 Rxa4 Rxc2 27 Rxc5 Rbb2 28 Rc8+ The author of Rook Endings has everything under control; Black has the classical two rooks on the seventh, but White has a mating attack. **Kh7 29 Rxa7 Rxf2 30 Rxf7** Idea: 31 Rff8 and Rh8 mate. **h5 31 Rff8 Kh6 32 h4** No exit via g5, and now the threat is 33 Rh8+ Nh7 34 Rc6+ Rxf5 35 Bd3 **Resigns.** Graceful elegance from the veteran.

● Luke McShane, aged 13, almost held his own at Lippstadt in his first all-play-all grandmaster tournament. His win here against a 2530-rated GM is in the style of the young Bobby Fischer and promises more success soon.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 **Nxe4 Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6** 6 h4 h6 7 **Nh3 e6 8 Nf4 Bh7 9** Bc4 Nf6 **10 c3 Bd6** Hindsight suggests that Be7 is safer. **11 Nfh5** 0-0 12 **Bg5!** Black cannot take and keep the bishop, and the next few transactions weaken his king.

Nbd7 13 Qf3 Bxg3 14 Nxg3 **hxg5 15 hxg5 Bg6** If Ne8 16 Qh5. **16 gxf6 Qxf6 17 Qg4** Rfd8 18 **f4 c5 19 Qh3 Kf8 20 0-0!** One expects long castling in such positions, but the f1 rook helps the decisive opening of the f file. Bf5 21 **Nxf5 Qxf5 22 g4 Qf6** 23 f5 Qg5 **24 fxe6 Nf6 25 Rae1** Threatening e7+ fxe6 **26 Re5 Qg6** 27 Rd **Resigns.** If Qf7 28 g5 wins.

No 2487



White mates in nine moves, against any defence (by N Sikdar, 1997). It took me half an hour to crack this puzzle from the latest issue of The Problemist; see if you can do better. For a free specimen copy of the magazine, write to C Russ, 76 Albany Drive, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 8SJ, United Kingdom.

No 2486: 1 b4 Kd8 2 h4 Ke8 3 **h5 and the h pawn queens and mates. If 1 . . . Kf8 2 Rc7** Ke8 3 **b5 and the b pawn queens and mates. Not 1 h4? Kf8 nor 1** Rc7 **Kd8.**

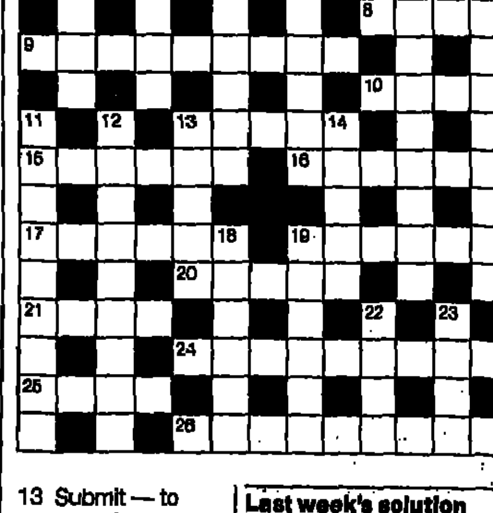
Quick crossword no. 381

Across

- 1 Infectious viral disease (9)
- 8 Thought (4)
- 9 Fire — and unload (9)
- 10 Formerly (4)
- 13 Postpone (5)
- 15 Linger (6)
- 16 Coventry's naked rider (6)
- 17 Club (6)
- 19 Staid (6)
- 20 Royal (5)
- 21 US state (4)
- 24 Wronged (9)
- 25 Friar — to gather — food for schoolboys (4)
- 26 Antiperspirant (9)

Down

- 2 Spike (4)
- 3 Good fortune (4)
- 4 Rubber (6)
- 5 Tortuous course (6)
- 6 Same (9)
- 7 Janitor (9)
- 11 Oscillate (9)
- 12 Impediment (9)
- 13 Submit — to delay (5)
- 14 Rustic (5)
- 18 Association (6)
- 19 Consecrated (6)
- 22 Expensive — address (4)
- 23 Poor — average (4)



Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico, was the setting for this year's American Summer Nationals, though I have to confess that I found the tournament frustrating in more ways than one.

The weather round these parts is traditionally dry and warm, but this year we spent the whole time getting soaked whenever we ventured outdoors. Also, the restaurants were fine if you were a committed carnivore, but of dubious appeal for anyone of other dietary tendencies — as a waiter explained to the member of our party who asked for a vegetarian dish, "Ma'am, this is the South West. Out here, we raise our cattle, we kill 'em, and we eat 'em!" To cap it all, my team lost in the semi-finals of the Spingold Trophy.

But others had their disappointments also. How would you feel if you were George Jacobs — a solid player perhaps better known for his repartee than for his bidding judgment — and you held these cards:

♠62 ♥J54 ♦86 ♣AKQJ97

and you heard this auction at game all:

South	West George	North	East
	1♣	1♠	Pass
3NT	Pass . . .		

"So far," you may be thinking to yourself, "so good. If they come to rest in 3NT, I will know what to lead."

But they don't come to rest in 3NT — instead, North jumps to 6NT! What would your reaction be when this is passed around to you?

I suppose your first reaction might be to check the backs of the cards. It's okay — you're all playing with the same deck. George's reaction, however, was a mixture of euphoria and caution: "What can possibly go wrong?" he wondered. "If I double, and they run to seven spades, they might escape for one down rather than five down. Perhaps — Heaven forbid — they might even make seven spades if partner is void in clubs, or doesn't lead one because he believes their crazy bidding. I'll just pass and collect my 500 — surely that can't be too bad."

So, in accordance with the best textbooks, George led the fourth-highest card of his longest suit — the jack of clubs. This was the full deal:

North
♠KJ108543
♥AK
♦A4
♣108

West
♠62
♥J54
♦86
♣AKQJ97

East
♠97
♥10986
♦9753
♣54

South
♠AQ
♥Q73
♦KQJ102
♣632

Declarer thanked his partner gravely, then followed with dummy's eight of clubs. East played the seven of spades. Then he looked at his hand again, and shamefacedly produced the four of clubs.

South didn't play anything. Instead, he called for the tournament director. That official explained that East's seven of spades was a penalty card. If West remained on lead at the end of the first trick, it would be open to South to request a spade lead from West. Thereupon, South followed to the first trick with the two of clubs, asked George to lead a spade, spread his hand, and claimed his slam.

Motor Racing Belgian Grand Prix

Schumacher is a world apart

Alan Henry in Spa

ANOTHER astute choice of tyres enabled Ferrari's Michael Schumacher to provide yet more evidence of his abilities on a sodden track here last Sunday. His victory in the Belgian Grand Prix was one of the most dominant of his Formula One career.

With Jacques Villeneuve trailing home sixth after a tactically disastrous race, Schumacher stretched his lead in the world drivers' championship to 12 points with five races and a maximum of 50 points available.

Schumacher, who qualified his F310B in third place, was the last driver to complete his pre-race reconnaissance lap after the circuit was drenched by a cloudburst 20 minutes before the scheduled starting time. The German concluded that intermediate tyres were the correct choice for the conditions while all his rivals chose the more deeply grooved full-wet tyres.

Although the conditions were so bad that the race began behind the safety car, the drivers circulating slowly in grid order for three laps, when the pack was unleashed Schumacher took only a lap to dispatch the polesitter Villeneuve and Benetton's Jean Alesi ahead of him.

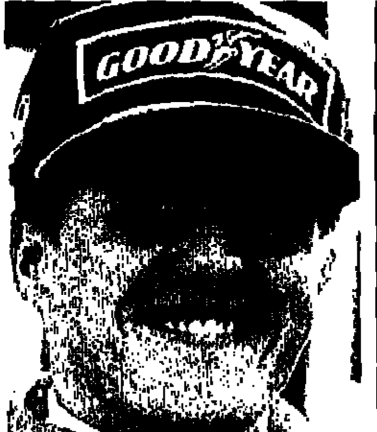
Thereafter the double world champion's progress was breathtaking, and after six of the race's 44 laps he had already opened up a lead of 16.9 seconds over Giancarlo Fisichella's Jordan-Peugeot.

Such was his dominance that Schumacher made his two routine refuelling pit-stops on laps 14 and 29 without relinquishing the lead. He eventually beat Fisichella by 26.7sec, the young Italian consolidating his reputation as one of the sport's brightest new talents.

Villeneuve's erroneous decision to start on full-wet tyres was compounded when he made an extremely premature first refuelling stop at the end of lap six — without warning his Williams mechanics over the radio. He switched to intermediate rubber but it was too early to add more fuel so he came in again on lap 10, this time switching to dry-weather slicks.

After his first stop the Canadian dropped to 18th, but he fought back resolutely to finish sixth behind Mika Hakkinen's McLaren-Mercedes, Heinz-Harald Frentzen's Williams-Renault and Johnny Herbert's Sauber. Hakkinen's run to his third top-three finish of the season was just reward for a troubled weekend that had seen him crash heavily at almost 200mph during practice, after his McLaren's rear suspension suffered a structural failure.

The Finn then had to race under the threat of disqualification after the post-qualifying scrutineering detected an apparent discrepancy in the car's fuel specification. Hakkinen was initially put to the back of the grid but, after McLaren appealed against the penalty, he was reinstated to fifth place. The matter will now be heard in a court of appeal by the FIA, Formula One's governing body.



Rainman . . . Schumacher

Damon Hill's weekend in the Arrows-Yamaha was unproductive, the world champion classified 14th after coming into the pits on the last lap with a loose wheel-securing nut. Earlier on, he hampered his prospects by switching to intermediate rubber at the wrong time, a decision that pushed him well down the order. Villeneuve, his former team-mate at Williams, will know precisely how he felt.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Rowell quits as rugby chief

JACK ROWELL'S stormy reign as England's Rugby Union coach came to a dramatic end when he resigned last week, nine days before his contract was due to expire and three years and four months after he was appointed for the job.

Rowell guided England to a World Cup semi-final, a Grand Slam and three Triple Crowns, but the national team has struggled in the recent past with the change to a more modern, fluid playing style, and this brought a torrent of hostile criticism from inside Twickenham.

Rugby authorities want a full-time coach for a job worth nearly £150,000 a year; Rowell wanted to continue on a part-time basis so as to allow him to pursue his business interests. England have a hectic intenational programme just weeks away, and at the moment there is no obvious successor to Rowell on the horizon.


Rowell . . . resignation

NORTHERN Ireland lost their 20-year unbeaten run against Germany when they went down 3-1 in their World Cup qualifying match in group nine in Belfast.

Up a goal in the 59th minute through Michael Hughes, the home side were left spectators as substitute Oliver Bierhoff blasted a hat-trick in the space of six minutes.

In group eight, the Republic of Ireland's hopes of reaching a third successive World Cup final suffered a serious setback when they were held to a scoreless draw by Lithuania in Dublin. It was 90 minutes of frustration for the 32,600 spectators as chance after chance went begging. The Irish totally dominated the game in terms of possession but could not break down a resolute and committed Lithuania defence.

Wales were turned over in amazing fashion by Turkey in group seven in Istanbul as the hosts kept their faint hopes alive thanks to a four-goal salvo from hit-man Hakan Sukur. Bobby Gould's team were reeling as they found themselves 2-0 down after just seven minutes. Nathan Blake, Dean Saunders and Robbie Savage turned it round, but the Turks were not to be denied. Hakan was devastating as he pounced repeatedly to send the home supporters wild. The final score: Turkey 6, Wales 4, a scoreline rarely seen at this level.

ETHIOPIAN Haile Gebrselassie lost both his world records in the Van Damme Memorial in Brussels last week. Daniel Komen, a 21-year-old Kenyan took two seconds off the Gebrselassie's 5,000m mark, set only nine days before, to stop the clock at 12min 39.74sec. Paul Tergat, also from Kenya, then grabbed the 10,000m record the Ethiopian runner established in Oslo seven weeks ago. He shaved nearly four seconds off the record to set his own mark at 26:27.85. It was the first time both records had been broken on the same day.

Sunday saw two other Kenyans, Wilson Kipketer and Bernard Barmasai, claim new world records at the Weltklasse meeting in Cologne. Kipketer, who eclipsed Sebastian Coe's 12-year mark of 1mn 41.73sec for the 800m in Zurich earlier this month, reduced his own time by 0.13sec to establish new figures of 1.41.11. Barmasai set a new record in the 3,000m steeplechase when he won in 7:55.72, improving the previous best mark set by another Kenyan, Wilson Boit Kipketer, by more than three seconds.

Golf European Open

Easy win for Johansson

David Davies in Kildare

NO ONE got near Per-Ulrik Johansson. The Swede made the final round of the European Open, at the K Club, a stroll in what is a very attractive park as he got round in 69 for a total of 267, 21 under par.

That was enough to ensure the defending champion a place in the Ryder Cup side while Jose Maria Olazábal's third-place finish, after a final 65, could well have lifted him into Severiano Ballesteros's team as an automatic choice.

Olazábal won $77,000, compared with the $6,160 of the man ahead of him in the Ryder Cup rankings, Padraig Harrington. That meant he went from being around $35,000 behind the Irishman to $35,000 in front, moving up to what is effectively 10th place in the rankings, given that Miguel Martin is injured.

Should things stay that way it will enable Ballesteros to select Nick Faldo and Jesper Parnevik, and Europe, to get their strongest team — on paper anyway — for the match at Valderrama.

On Sunday Johansson birdied the 1st, which none of his immediate rivals did, to extend his overnight lead of four shots to five. Thereafter he felt no pressure. Further birdies at the 8th and 10th meant a winning total 10 shots better than last year. He won by six strokes from Peter Baker and picked up $228,000 for his pains.

For the second successive round Olazábal began as if he was about to demolish the course record. Just as in the third round he reached the turn in 31, five under par, which moved him to 12-under for the tournament and joint fifth place. Now he was poised to make serious inroads on Harrington, who was struggling at the tail-end of the field.

But after the Saturday round he admitted he had failed to "finish the job", and there were again a few wobbles during ther final round. At the 8th, 9th and 10th holes he missed from eight, 12 and 10 feet, and his manager, Sergio Gomez, sighed: "He is playing beautifully but still the putts do not all go."

Olazábal now flies to Munich for the BMW International Open. He will take the opportunity to see Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfarht, the man who got him back on the golf course after an 18-month absence. "Occasionally," said Olazabal, "I have a problem with my third toe, but not all the time, and it does not stop me playing." Final rounds of 67 and 65 would surely testify to that.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Barnsley 0, Chelsea 3; Blackburn Rovers 1, Liverpool 1; Coventry City 2, Bolton Wanderers 2; Everton 2, West Ham Utd 1; Leeds Utd 0, Crystal Palace 2; Leicester City 0, Manchester Utd 0, Newcastle United 1, Aston Villa 0; Southampton 1, Arsenal 3; Tottenham Hotspur 1, Derby County 0; Wimbledon 1, Sheffield Wed 1
Mon: Blackburn 7 v Sheff Wed 2

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
First division: Birmingham 3, Reading 0; Bradford C 2, Ipswich 1; Bury 0, Charlton 0, Middlesbro 0, Stoke 1; Norwich 0, Crewe 2; Oxford 0, Nottm For1; Port Vale 3, Sunderland 1, QPR 2, Stockport 1; Sheff Utd 2, Portsmth 1; Swindon 1 Huddersfld 1; West Brom 1, Wolves 0.

Second division: Blackpool 2, Wycombe 4; Bristol R 3, Carlisle1; Chesterfld 3, Preston 2; Fulham 0, Luton 0; Gillingham 2, Walsall 1; Grimsby 0, Wrexham 0, Millwall 2, York 3; Northmptn 2, Bristol City 1; Oldham 2, Bournemth 1; Southend 1, Burnley 0, Watford 3, Brentford 1; Wigan 1, Plymouth 1.

Third division: Chester 1, Cambridge United 1; Exeter 1, Darlington 0, Leyton Orient 2, Rochdale 0, Macclesfld 3, Doncaster 0, Mansfield 1, Cardiff 2; Notts Co 1, Lincoln 2; Peterboro 2, Hull 0; Rotherham 2, Hartlepool 1; Shrewsbury 1 Torquay 2; Swansea 2, Scunthorpe 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Premier division: Aberdeen 1, Motherwell 3, Dunfrmline 2, Hearts 1; Hibernian 4, Kilmarnock 0; Rangers 5, Dundee United 1; St Johnstone 0, Celtic 2.

First division: Airdrie 2, Falkirk 2; Ayr 2, Partick 2; Dundee 1, St Mirren 0; Hamilton 2, Raith 0; Stirling A 1, Morton 3

Second division: Clydebank 2, Clyde 2; Forfar 2, Brechin 5; Stenhsmr 1, Livingston 1; Stranraer 2, Queen Sth 1; Inverness 0, East Fife 1.

Third division: Berwick 5, Dumbarton 3; Cowdenbeath 0, Ross Co 1; East Stirling 2, Alloa 1; Montrose 0, Arbroath 3; Queens Park 5, Albion 1.

Rugby Union

Jetlagged Wallabies grounded

Felix Cuypers at Johannesburg

IT WAS a day of redemption for much-maligned South African rugby. Their under-fire coach Carel du Plessis saw his squad roll up its highest point total against Australia with a record eight-try outburst, clinching second place in the Tri-Nations series with a 61-22 victory.

"I think he's pretty happy," South Africa's captain Gary Teichmann said. "It hasn't been the best season, but we worked hard and it paid off."

With tries from seven players, the Springboks blasted away from a three-point half-time lead to outscore the jet-lagged Wallabies 43-7 after the break.

Jannie de Beer scored 26 points, Percy Montgomery had two tries and the returning Andre Joubert broke plays everywhere.

With increasing confidence, South Africa picked up the pace in the second half, and the Wallabies simply ran out of steam. "They moved it up a couple of gears, and we couldn't keep up," Australia's acting captain David Wilson said.

In was a hard-hitting game at sold-out Loftus Verfeld with one player from each side stretchered off. South Africa carved a slight lead in an inconsistent first half. An untidy line-out by Australia led to a poor back pass that South Africa's Joost van der Westhuizen picked up. Rassie Erasmus took his pass down the left side and got the try in the sixth minute.

De Beer converted, then added two penalties to expand their lead to 13-0.

But the Wallabies came storming back. After failing to take advantage when De Beer's clearing kick was blocked, David Knox got some points on the board for Australia.

The Wallabies then put on a beautiful passing display which culminated in Joe Roff touching down. Knox, who missed his first conversion, connected this time, then got a penalty in injury time to put Australia ahead at 15-13.

In the half's last seconds, Joubert took Australia's clearing kick and put together a run to midfield. James Dalton took an improbable pass as De Beer was tackled out of bounds and dotted down on the right side. The Springboks' Mark Andrews finished off a determined drive early in the second half, and Pieter Roussow intercepted a Wallaby pass to go in untouched for 30-15.

Montgomery scored his first try when Van der Westhuizen got off a pass under three defenders. Warren Brosnihan scored a try in his Test debut, and Montgomery followed with his second try in a 70-metre breakaway for a 54-15 advantage.

Jason Little salvaged some pride for the Wallabies with a late try that Knox converted. Then De Beer touched down and converted to finish the rout.